Mental Health and Hindu Psychology

Swami Akhilananda

MENTAL HEALTH AND HINDU PSYCHOLOGY

By the same author

MODERN PROBLEMS AND RELIGION
SPIRITUAL PRACTICES
MENTAL HEALTH AND HINDU PSYCHOLOGY
HINDU PSYCHOLOGY
HINDU VIEW OF CHRIST



SWAMI AKHILANANDA

MENTAL HEALTH AND HINDU PSYCHOLOGY

BY

Swami Akhilananda

of the Ramakrishna Order of India

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TO MY BELOVED MASTER

SRIMAT SWAMI BRAHMANANDAJI MAHARAJ

SPIRITUAL SON OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

WITH LOVING DEVOTION AND HUMBLE SALUTATIONS

Contents

Introduction

By O. Hobart Mowrer
Research Professor of Psychology, University of Illinois

THE thesis of this book is at once new and very old. In prehistoric and even early historic times, problems both of the body and of the soul, or psyche, were ministered to by the same persons: priests, shamans, medicine men. Medicine, in the modern sense of the term, is often dated from developments in fifth century (B.C.) Greece which were associated with the name of Hippocrates but which dipped back into the earlier civilizations of Egypt, Babylonia, India, and China. By the end of the second century, A.D., the spotlight in medicine had shifted to Rome, where its brightest star was Galen. During the Dark Ages in Europe, interest in research and medical inquiry was kept alive in Alexandria and a few other spots east and south of the Mediterranean. But at no time was medicine a serious rival of established religion, for its rationale was feeble and its practical results problematic.

However, with the Renaissance, such men as Vesalius, Harvey, Lister and Leeuwenhoek appeared and then, in the middle of the nineteenth century came Pasteur and the germ theory of disease and the development of anesthesia and surgery. Since that time progress in medicine has been little short of miraculous. In 1850 the average life span in New England was 40 years. By 1900 it had risen to 47 years for the United States as a whole, and at the present time it is 67 years. What more eloquent tribute to medical progress!

It is not surprising, then, that within the past century or two we have turned increasingly to medicine for treatment in the realm of physical disease; and it is understandable that we should also have looked hopefully to it for aid in dealing with "mental disease." Here, however, the results have been disappointing.

Nothing comparable to the miracles of physical medicine has happened in psychological medicine, as is attested by the mental hospital population of this country (about 800,000) and the high incidence of ambulatory psychotic and severely neurotic persons.

To date, we can justly say that the medical approach to "mental disease" has failed. This approach was at first explicitly organic, as such terms as "neurosis" (an "osis" of the nerves), "neurasthenia" (nerve weakness), and "nervous-ness" imply. The causes of all such disorders were sought in terms of constitutional taint, degeneration, atrophy, tumors, germs, toxins, and so forth. In some types of disturbances, e.g. general paresis and pellagra psychosis, this approach succeeded brilliantly, but it left untouched the source of difficulty in the overwhelming majority of cases.

At this stage, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, Sigmund Freud put forward a somewhat different theory that aroused new hope. He, too, had been trained as a physician, but he transcended his training to the extent of positing that most personality disturbances are in no way connected with organic factors. However much he thus departed from established medical tradition, Freud did not entirely escape the influence of his professional background; for the new theory of mental disorder which he advanced likewise had a strong *biological* bias. It assumed, as is now well known, that personality problems arise when and *only when* the "natural expression" of such impulses as lust and hostility is blocked, inhibited, frustrated. This impairment of biologically normal functioning comes about most typically when the efforts of parents and other socializers of the young succeed, Freud believed, only too well in their purposes and thereby produce adults who are psychologically stunted, crippled in respect to their capacity to satisfy these inherent needs and thus be healthy and happy.

This type of thinking has enjoyed and still enjoys an enormous vogue. However, it has not given us either an efficient method for treating personality disorders or a new philosophy of life or theory of education which enables us to prevent them. What it *has* given us is a powerful research tool which continues to provide new information and understanding. Use of the psychoanalytic method in treatment has abundantly demonstrated the

soundness of Freud's position with respect to the futility of symptom therapy. Symptoms, Freud held and many others have now confirmed, are but the habits which neurotically anxious persons develop as means of dealing with their otherwise intractable suffering. Freud rightly insisted that attention be turned from the symptom to the sufferer, to the person as such.

Freud's next assumption, with which today there is also general agreement, was that neurotic suffering always involves a mystery; there is, he maintained, always something unintelligible, unknown, something unconscious about it. Neurotic anxiety, he said, comes about because something has been put "out of mind" (dissociated, repressed), and it is the periodic attempt of this something to return to consciousness that produces the mystifying, terrifying experience of neurotic anxiety.

But what is this something? Freud, as we know, maintained that it was either sexuality or aggression. Here, it seems, Freud was in error. He did not see what now is unmistakable, namely, that the something which falls under repression in the neurotic is his *conscience*, his moral and ethical strivings, rather than his biologically given needs of sex and aggression. Neurosis, it now appears, is not the result of biological frustration but of moral frustration. Freud correctly saw that the prelude to neurosis is a conflict between biologically given impulses (immaturities) and social pressures which are internalized in the form of conscience; but because of his training as a physician, we conjecture, Freud mistakenly assumed that the pathogenic resolution of this conflict involved renunciation of impulse rather than of conscience. The correction of this error bids fair to bring a long overdue revitalization of psychotherapy and of the theory underlying it.

But this development does something else. With it history comes full circle, and we see again the legitimacy of the concern of religious leaders in such matters. Traditionally, they, more than any other group, have been concerned with the problem of man's relation to others and to himself, with man's *goodness* and his *happiness*. They, especially, have been interested in questions of conscience, guilt, temptation, conflict, and anxiety. But for complex historical reasons, most religious leaders had, until recently, abandoned their position as psychic physicians and retired to the remoter realms of theology and metaphysics. Today, how-

ever, a vigorous new movement looms on the horizon. Recent books by Fosdick, Hiltner, May, Liebman, Sheen, and others tell the story of this re-awakening and point to momentous potential developments.

Let us be more concrete. Imagine a small American town with a population of 2000 or 3000. Typically such a town will have five or six physicians and about the same number of churches. The physicians are likely to be busy, harassed men who are overworked and whose waiting rooms are overcrowded because of patients whose problems are primarily psychological but who know nowhere else to go. By contrast the churches in that town are likely to be empty six days of the week and only half filled on Sunday! Surely the moral is obvious. Here lies a golden opportunity for the churches to revitalize themselves and, at the same time, to render a significant social service.

At the present time the relatively new and still small professions of psychiatry, social work, and clinical psychology are attempting to meet the needs of persons with emotional and personality problems. But thus far their services are mainly limited to larger cities, and even here there is a great discrepancy between services available and the need for them. Thousands of churches the country over, by contrast, offer potential facilities of great scope. Churches, unlike schools, are legitimately concerned not just with children but with the "whole family." Everyone, regardless of age, may "go to church." Moreover, the church, at least in principle, is prepared to operate at both the broadly educational and the more specifically therapeutic levels, to deal, that is, with both groups and individuals. Given a new type of leadership which now seems, in fact, to be emerging and a somewhat altered conception of the place of religion in the life of modern men and women, the churches are in a position to do more than any other agency or institution within our entire society to influence our common culture along lines of mental hygiene and social reconstruction.

But the realization of this objective will not be easy. The modern mind is in no mood for metaphysical makeshift; its problems must be met scientifically, rationally, honestly. And it will take time before religious leadership can make the internal accommoda-

tions and reorientation which are necessary if present opportunities are to be seized and effectively utilized.

The present volume by Swami Akhilananda presents what will be for most Americans new and certainly important facts and perceptions in this field of endeavor. To Swami Akhilananda the separation of religion and clinical psychology in this country must, in the beginning of his long sojourn here, have been an arresting spectacle; for in Hinduism, psychology and religion are one and inseparable. Certainly this old and great system of thought has valuable insights and suggestions to contribute to the resolution of our particular problems in a creative and constructive way.

More than this, the author is an accomplished scholar, not only in the field of classical religion (see his *Hindu View of Christ*), but also in respect to the theories and theoretical dilemmas of contemporary psychiatry, psychology, and sociology (cf. *Hindu Psychology*). He knows the meaning of anxiety in both its normal and neurotic sense, and he sees clearly the paradoxes and inadequacies of Freudian psychoanalysis. But, most of all, Swami Akhilananda is a refined, sensitive, tolerant human being whose wisdom and kindliness have already touched the lives of innumerable persons and will, in the present volume, bring new understanding and a surer perspective to many more.

Preface

IN A casual way one day, our good friend Dr. Gordon W. Allport noted the subjects of our lectures in Boston and said: "Swami, these should form a book." Until that day, we had no notion of writing a book on mental health and integration of personality. So it was he who was really responsible for stimulating the idea of getting together a number of lectures and putting them into book form. Again, we hold him responsible because of his interest in the progress of this humble contribution to the field of mental health.

Pioneering work in mental health was started towards the end of the eighteenth century by a great French physician, Dr. Pinel, whose departure from the old inhuman treatment of mental patients was inspired by his sympathy for them. A number of English, French, and German physicians followed the lead of Pinel in dealing with the insane. More systematic study of psychotherapy was started gradually in the West by such thinkers as Charcot, Janet, Kraepelin, Bleuler, and Freud during the eighties of the last century. Many outstanding individuals in the West have become interested in mental health. Since the first World War, serious consideration has been given to methods of psychotherapy. It seems that the mental health of a majority of the people is seriously affected; consequently, they are developing what are known as psychosomatic diseases and neurotic and psychotic behavior. It has been established by general physicians, psychiatrists, and clinical psychologists that a majority of physical disturbances are psychogenic. So not only medical specialists but also philosophers, scientists, and rationalistic thinkers of all types are deeply interested in methods for stabilizing the mind.

The Hindus started their psychological research on the basis of their spiritual experiences. Certain methods are necessary for

the attainment of what they call *samadhi* (superconsciousness). We have already discussed the various aspects of the psychology of the Hindus in another book, *Hindu Psychology*. Even though their primary interest is in religious development, they fully realize that until and unless the mind is wholly unified and integrated there is no possibility of spiritual realization or mystical experiences. Herein lies the utility of the contributions of the Hindus to the field of mental health. The technique of their spiritual realization is based on what they term *paramartha* or the supreme goal of life, which is the fundamental principle in stabilizing the mind. Mental health is the prerequisite of spiritual discipline. So long as the mind is disturbed and agitated by conflicting emotions and consequent tension, there is no peace of mind; and when there is no peace of mind there is no joy in life. Neither can a restless mind have the possibility for realizing the ultimate truth. The mind is the instrument of perception. So long as it is unsteady and unstable, we cannot correctly perceive a thing. When we think of the ultimate truth which is beyond the pale of ordinary experiences, we require mental development which is stronger than ordinary mental health. So it is worth while for modern Western scholars of psychotherapy to consider the contribution of Hindu psychology in the field of mental health at this critical juncture of Western civilization.

Western psychotherapists of various schools have, of course, been trying to solve the mental problems of the people. Yet in spite of their attempts and noble contributions they lack something which can be given by the religious psychology of India for the understanding of the total personality and the goal of life. So we feel that understanding between Western psychotherapy of various types and the Indian system of mental training can become a great strength for the solution of mental problems and psychosomatic diseases.

Hindu psychology includes Buddhistic and Jaina systems of thought. These two schools are offshoots of Hindu thought. As they have functioned in India along with Hindu ideas, the three schools have commingled to such an extent that it is now difficult to separate their contributions. For the sake of convenience we are here calling the three systems of thought by the term Hindu psychology.

Hindu religion, philosophy, and psychology are inseparably connected. Consequently, when we discuss the religious outlook and religious values we necessarily mean the philosophical background of religion and also mental training. By religion we mean neither sectarianism nor a dogmatic conception of any type of religious thought or method. We want to make it clear that the religious goal can be achieved by different persons of different mental aptitudes in different ways, without any particularization and overemphasis on one method or one doctrine. Nevertheless, we emphasize that religious values cannot be achieved without mental integration.

The technique of mental training suggested by Hindu thinkers is of vital importance for the integration of the mind and for proper mental health. So we humbly offer to the Western psychotherapists and the general public the contributions of Hindu psychologists to consider and absorb into their own systems of thought.

We beg to differ with those psychiatrists who have certain definite ideas of the predominant urge in man. Hindu psychologists take a broad viewpoint of the human mental states. Although they feel that the master urge or sentiment is the desire for abiding joy, they do not condemn or negate the biological urges of man. Rather, they try to subordinate them to this master urge. It will be worth while for Western psychiatrists and Eastern psychiatrists who are trained in the Western system to consider the contribution of Hindu psychologists in the field of technical training of the mind and in the development of the philosophy of life. With this view we present this little book.

Because these were originally extemporaneous lectures delivered and recorded in Boston and Providence they may have a tendency toward repetition. Again, we have had to make this book comparatively free from many technicalities knowing that it will also be read by the general public. For this reason it may seem like preaching in some places. We hope that the readers will forgive these defects. As we feel it is worth while for the psychiatrists and religious counselors to see if they can be mutually benefited by the system of Hindu psychology, we are presenting this book in this form. They can further study the original systems of Hindu thought. This is only meant for the

stimulation of their research in the therapeutic contribution of Hindu psychology.

What little we have learned to be of service to disturbed persons and to our own students and devotees is entirely to the credit of our beloved Master, Swami Brahmananda. We often noticed him and other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna showing sympathy and love to their disciples, devotees, and others, regardless of religious or racial affiliations. Their unbounded love has lifted many persons from their distressed and disturbed states. From our boyhood, we noticed the tremendous spiritual power of our beloved Master in lifting different persons to a higher plane of consciousness. It is he who really inspired us to devote our life to the service of the seekers of truth. The influence of Swami Premananda, another disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, in our life has contributed immensely to our understanding of the human mind. The teachings of Swami Vivekananda are indeed the guiding force in our thinking of mental and spiritual problems of modern man. So if any credit is given to anyone for this humble contribution, it goes to these three great personalities and to other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna who unceasingly loved and blessed us.

We are grateful to Professor O. Hobart Mowrer of the University of Illinois for writing the Introduction. He and Professor Gordon W. Allport and Professor Edgar S. Brightman have stimulated us in psychological and spiritual discussions for several years.

Our thanks go to some of the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order of India who kindly read the manuscript. Our affectionate gratitude goes especially to Professor Edgar S. Brightman of Boston University; Professor Gordon W. Allport of Harvard University; Dr. Dana L. Farnsworth of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Dean Walter G. Muelder, Professor Paul E. Johnson, Professor Peter A. Bertocci, Mr. John D. Copp, and Dr. Robert P. Benedict of Boston University; Dr. David Wright, Superintendent of Butler Hospital; and Dr. Allen E. Claxton of New York City; for their reading of the manuscript and for their valuable suggestions. Dr. Ordway Tead, Chairman of the Board of Higher Education in New York City, and Editor of Social and Economic Books of Harper & Brothers, personally read the

manuscript and gave valuable suggestions. We are greatly indebted to him for his genuine contributions to this book. We are indeed indebted to some of our students and friends who recorded our lectures, typed the manuscript, and helped in various ways. We also thankfully acknowledge the authors and publishers who very kindly permitted us to quote from their books.

The result of this humble offering goes to the all-loving Being.

SWAMI AKHILANANDA

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MENTAL HEALTH AND HINDU PSYCHOLOGY

CHAPTER I

Therapeutic Value of Indian Psychology

THE modern world is deeply interested in psychosomatic diseases and their treatment. Many of the best medical authorities consider that there are numerous physical ailments which cannot be treated without an understanding of their psychological background. In fact, they feel that the majority of diseases are psychogenic, namely, originating in mental disturbance and tension, and hence they have a practical interest in psychosomatic diseases and their treatment. The word "psychosomatic" is a combination of "psyche" (mind) and "soma" (body), from the Greek. The physicians who are interested in psychosomatic medicine realize that physical diseases cannot be treated properly unless their causes, which are rooted in the mind, are removed or straightened out.

According to certain statistical accounts, in America eighty per cent of the medical cases are psychogenic. According to other accounts, the percentage is about sixty-six. The recently retired Surgeon General of the United States declared that more than one half of the cases treated by physicians were of this type, and admitted that the number might actually be much higher than fifty per cent. Most of the American medical authorities, as well as psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychotherapists, are deeply concerned about the situation. Various other types of psychiatric disturbances are also attracting a great deal of attention from practitioners concerned with physical and mental ailments, and from religious leaders as well. It is almost certain that in the near future people in the Eastern countries will also be giving their attention to these problems, for their ways of life are changing

considerably. It is natural that people will be deeply interested in knowing how Indian psychology can contribute to the field of psychosomatic medicine at the present stage of civilization.

In order to understand the contributions of Indian psychology to this field, it is essential that one first understand the nature of mental and psychosomatic problems. Broadly speaking, physical ailments can be classified into two groups. First, there are the physiogenic diseases which stem from the physical condition. Some of these ailments are congenital; they are either inherited or they are in the very makeup of the human constitution. Others are caused by bacteria of various types, such as tuberculosis and typhoid bacilli, and by non-filterable viruses. Sometimes physical ailments can arise from malnutrition (lack of the essential ingredients of the body) or from the deterioration of the physical constitution due to old age and other changes in the body. Climatic conditions create certain ailments. All of these diseases are organic.

In the second group are the psychogenic ailments created by mental conditions which affect the nervous system. These are generally called "functional" by physicians. They include peptic ulcers, mucous colitis, hypertension (high blood pressure), certain kinds of heart symptoms, asthma, and certain other disorders commonly referred to as psychosomatic in nature.[1]

Those who use psychosomatic treatment declare that psychological diseases or functional ailments cannot be cured by medical methods alone, although in acute conditions medical help is necessary. Neurosurgery has proved to be beneficial in many extreme cases of acute functional trouble, such as hypertension and consequent heart ailment. However, no permanent cure is possible without restoring the mental health of the patient, even though medical care is helpful. So proper psychological understanding of the causes of functional disease is of vital importance in attempts to eliminate it.

[1] A clinical study of nearly three hundred cases made in the Boston Dispensary under the supervision of Dr. Joseph Pratt and his colleague Dr. Golden, revealed that many of the so-called organic diseases were purely psychogenic. They were cured and helped through suggestion and thought training.

See also Wolf and Wolfe, *Human Gastric Function* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1943).

Psychiatric disturbances are classified into two groups—neuroses and psychoses. Functional diseases are included under the neuroses. There are also cases which can be included under psychoneuroses. People who suffer from psychoneuroses are not insane but they have emotional disorders, affecting the nerve functions, which stem from maladjustment, insecurity, inordinate ambition, anxiety, fear, frustration, and other tensions. Some persons have distinct behavior difficulties and show considerable disturbance in their personal and interpersonal relationships. Their behavior patterns are affected by their mental conditions; and, although they have regular activities and duties in human society, they are regarded as abnormal personalities because they act in an irregular and unusual manner and often in a way that is considered irrational. It is difficult to help neurotic personalities because of their tendency to cling to and repeat their behavior which serves a particular purpose for them. Not until functional troubles become disturbing do people seek and use psychotherapy. Religious psychology properly used at a sufficiently early stage could prevent the development of the symptoms. Hence, the contributions of Hindu psychology should be properly evaluated.

Psychotic persons are disorganized in their mental life and human relationships. They may be classified as suffering from dementia praecox or schizophrenia, paranoia, manic-depressive psychosis, involutional melancholia, and so forth. Sometimes, symptoms identical with those which are evident in these diseases may be due to organic disease of the brain and nervous system, such as infection, tumor, or congenital defects. However, the vast majority of these cases arise from mental disturbances caused by maladjustments or tensions.

There are behavior disorders which do not come under any definite category, such as exaggerated aggression, obsession, and compulsion. They are generally regarded as psychoneurotic because they are not wholly psychotic, yet they have distinct neurotic characteristics. Persons with such disorders become unpopular in society because of their activities, speech, and behavior, which are affected by their aggression and attitudes of superiority. The obsessive type of person cannot change his pattern of repetitive thinking, even though the ideas that come to his mind are insig-

nificant. He makes much of petty matters; consequently, his behavior, mental condition, and nervous system, as well as his social adjustment are gradually affected. People with compulsive behavior patterns repeat their actions without any justification, as if they were possessed by them. Anxiety neuroses can be included in this group of ailments, as they are expressed in neurotic phobias which are based on fear, panic, and the like.

Psychoneurotic disturbances are often accompanied by definite physical symptoms like heart palpitation, perspiration, exhaustion, or fainting spells. There have been many instances of pain or other disturbances which were generally regarded as physical ailments when they were actually psychogenic disturbances. This does not mean that stomach ulcers, aches and pains in the teeth, head, shoulder, chest, stomach, legs, or other parts of the body are imaginary, but rather that they are often created by mental conditions with consequent nerve disorders which lead to pain. They are mostly to be cured or helped by mental suggestion, training, and adjustment.

Certain mental conditions and attitudes bring about neurotic and psychotic disturbances. It is well established that the early insecurity of childhood creates aggressiveness with inferiority and superiority complexes. In our experience with individual situations, we have observed a number of persons whose mental conditions were upset and whose behavior patterns were unusual because of early insecurity. A young man of our acquaintance lost his father when he was a small child. He was brought up in the house of relatives. He got everything that he wanted from them through his own demands rather than through their spontaneous emotional expression toward him. As a result, his behavior became more and more aggressive, overbearing, and full of superiority. He developed these qualities to compensate for his sense of inferiority and natural craving for emotional satisfaction. Not only was his behavior as an adult colored by his mental disturbance, but he had serious functional troubles all his life. Medical care has brought him no permanent help. Many such instances could be enumerated.

Anxiety, also, arises from the sense of insecurity, which ultimately leads to numerous neurotic symptoms and psychotic conditions. In one case, the parents of a young boy were divorced

and the mother married another man with whom the boy had to live. Since he experienced a good deal of resentment and insecurity because of the change in conditions, he developed most disagreeable neurotic symptoms and functional ailments. He had considerable medication, yet he did not seem to be helped until he had religious psychotherapy to strengthen his emotional life.

There have been innumerable persons who have developed both neurotic and psychotic symptoms from a sense of guilt. Consciousness of sinful activities and overemphasis on the effect of such activities partly or completely disorganize many personalities. A middle-aged professional man developed a sense of guilt because of his illegal practices. In order to escape from it he developed an extreme form of alcoholism. The persistent feeling of guilt haunted him so much that he had no alternative but to forget everything under the influence of alcohol. The Western types of psychoanalysis and other such therapeutic methods were tried for years and years but could not help him to eliminate either the cause of his mental disturbances or the alcoholism.

Many persons develop acute alcoholism because of mental tension and frustration. There are millions of people who are known as alcoholics, because without alcohol they cannot go on in life. They enter a vicious circle, depending on alcohol for the release from tension and frustration, while this very habit of drinking makes them more and more emotionally disturbed. When their everyday lives and interpersonal relationships are seriously impeded, they again intensify their drinking to forget their problems. Of course, we do not include the so-called social drinkers in the category of alcoholics, but we are apprehensive that many of these social drinkers can and do become real alcoholics. In many religious groups alcoholism is regarded as sinful; however, most authorities understand it as a psychological ailment which ought to be treated as such.

There has been a change in attitude toward this problem in the same way that the general attitude toward mental illness has been modified. In the Middle Ages in Europe, mentally disturbed persons were regarded as possessed by the devil or evil spirits, and they were humiliated by the treatment given them. Today, it is understood by psychotherapists and others that they are suffering from maladjustment, frustration, and tension.

Consequently, sincere persons have made numerous attempts to combat the problem of alcoholism, seeing it as an escape mechanism for the avoidance of disturbances and unhappiness. Legislation and other controls have been established; however, according to the Hindu psychologists, they cannot solve the problem until mental and emotional satisfaction is created and will power is developed. We have seen persons who controlled this habit by integration of the will. Without a strong will it is almost impossible to overcome the habit of drinking because it is basically a psychological problem. As is well known, Alcoholics Anonymous appeals to religious motivation for strengthening of the will.

Ambition and the urges of self-expression, knowledge and sex, and also the gregarious urge can create frustration and an extreme form of tension, with consequent neurotic symptoms and behavior patterns. A great scientist of our acquaintance had many marital difficulties. In spite of his scientific achievements, his emotional reactions seemed to be immature so that he was always frustrated in the intimate marital relationship. Consequently, he had many symptoms of functional ailments in his intimate life. This individual was considerably helped by a thoughtful, patient, and persevering wife. We also know a number of persons who developed serious neurotic behavior and functional disorders because of the fear of failure in their ambitious attempts to have a successful life. Western psychoanalysis has been successful in such situations, as Dr. Franz Alexander, Dr. T. M. French, and other psychoanalysts report.[2] A number of psychiatrists have been helping many such mentally disturbed persons. Religious counselors are also doing good work in this field of psychotherapy.

Mental tension, which causes neurosis and psychosis, is due to ineffective, unfulfilled ambitions and conflict in the mind. According to the majority of the psychoanalysts of the West—

[2] Franz Alexander, *Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1950). See also Franz Alexander and Thomas Morton French, *Studies in Psychosomatic Medicine* (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1948). Robert W. White, *The Abnormal Personality* (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1948), chap. IX, "Psychotherapy: Basic Methods." Elihu S. Wing, "Diversion, Relaxation and Sleep." *The Rhode Island Medical Journal*, XXII (May, 1939).

namely, the Freudians—conflict and tension are generally created by repression of the sex urge due to the activity of the superego —namely, certain aspects of religious, ethical, and social ideals. They also say that tension is caused by conflict between the so-called pleasure principle (the modified sex urge) and the death wish. They seem to think that there is harm in this conflict but they do not prescribe a thoroughgoing method of overcoming it. In addition, their psychoanalysis does not remove the tension created by the pleasure principle itself, so long as pleasure remains the supreme objective of life. In the psychoanalytical process, it is true, methods of "free association," interpretation of dreams, and transference have been ameliorating in certain cases. Indian psychologists do not deny the existence of the desire for the pursuit of pleasure through sex expression or other means, but they consider it of secondary importance. It is proper to note here that there are some psychologists such as Professor Gordon Allport of Harvard University and Professor O. Hobart Mowrer of the University of Illinois; psychiatrists such as Dr. William Brown of England, Dr. Carl G. Jung of Switzerland, and a few Americans; and medical men such as Dr. Joseph Pratt of Boston and Dr. Harry Bone of New York, who do not take this narrow view of the cause of mental disorder. Freudian emphasis on the sex urge has created more tension and disturbance than it has cured. Conflict and tension often go together, unless there is inner harmony established by higher understanding in the form of religious development.

Adlerian psychologists declare that the urge of self-expression should be given a proper outlet. As Professor Albert J. Levine writes:

> This feeling of superiority constitutes a sense of Adlerian individuality. It is an all-inclusive and absolute superiority into which rationality and irrationality enter as conflicting elements; reason tempers the aspirations of the irrational self in its phases of godlike phantasying; while the irrational self feeds the springs of self-esteem and self-glorification.[8]

In the study of individuals it is found that when a man has a hedonistic attitude toward life there is no end to his self-ex-

[8] Albert J. Levine, *Current Psychologies* (Cambridge: Sci-Art Publishers, 1940), p. 207.

pression. He gradually becomes more and more egocentric and selfish; consequently, when this urge is accentuated in him and in others, as it is in modern men and women there is extreme conflict and tension.

Dr. Carl Jung, on the other hand, firmly believes in a broader view of life. According to his view, religion is not harmful; on the contrary, it is of great help. He does not seem to have a narrow attitude regarding complexes. His interpretation of the libido as the vital force is much broader than the Freudian. It is interesting to note what Dr. Gregory Zilboorg has to say about the place of religion in psychic disturbances. He states that "there should really be no quarrel with religion on the basis of our concepts of guilt."[4] Clinical psychologists, such as Professor O. Hobart Mowrer, do not feel that religion necessarily creates mental conflict. He says:

> If I can read the signs of our time aright, one of the great tasks which confronts us in our quest for peace of mind and more meaningful existence is the *rediscovery of ethics.* For historical reasons which we have already examined, morality and personal responsibility have become unfashionable.[5]

He further says that "religion is right in its contention that the problem of personal happiness and normality is inextricably bound up with the moral nature of man."[6]

A number of American psychiatrists are taking a broad view of the cause and treatment of psychic disturbance. It is refreshing to note that this trend of thought is constructive and healthy. The report of the Committee on Psychiatric Social Work of the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry is an outstanding example of this breadth of view. It requires deep consideration. To quote from the report: ". . . all the disorders of personality, regardless of the age of the patient, are compounds of disturbed interrelationships in which biological, psychological, and sociological processes are always present and interwoven."[7] It is also

[4] Gregory Zilboorg, "The Sense of Guilt and Reality," *Digest of Neurology and Psychiatry*, XVIII (April, 1950), 226.

[5] O. Hobart Mowrer, "Biological vs. Moral 'Frustration' in Personality Disturbances," *Progressive Education*, XXVI, (January, 1949), p. 67.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

[7] "Psychiatric Social Work in the Psychiatric Clinic," (Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, Committee on Psychiatric Social Work, June 12, 1950), p. 1. (Typewritten.)

of interest to observe what Professor Allport has to say in his latest book, *The Individual and His Religion.* He writes:

> It is not psychiatry, but the sciences of government, of sociology, of human relations that have overslept. If the psychiatrist is at fault at all, it is because he does not see clearly enough that mental health and disease are to a considerable extent dependent upon the social setting. Working in isolation he can never solve problems that require concerted effort. Widespread improvement in mental health awaits the time when he can work effectively with statesmen, sociologists, the clergy, educators, anthropologists, economists, social workers, administrators, psychologists, and medical practitioners.[8]

The definite psychotic disturbances, such as dementia praecox, paranoia, manic depressive psychosis, and the various types of obsessive and compulsive psychoses, can often be traced to one or more of the conflicts and tensions described above, although in some individuals there may be certain congenital defects in either the nervous system or the emotional structure. However, proper psychotherapy can alleviate and often eliminate the symptoms of psychosis. The modern methods of electric and insulin shock treatment and lobotomy have been helpful in the relief of many cases; but psychiatric and medical authorities realize that psychotherapy is essential after the treatments for the establishment of mental harmony and the elimination of further tension and frustration. Clinical studies show that many patients become fairly normal after such drastic physical methods, although some of the highest authorities in medicine prefer that such treatment should be given with considerable caution and only when it is necessary. But in any event, post-shock psychotherapy is regarded as essential for permanent cure. The severe psychotic illnesses require, at first, proper medical treatment along with psychotherapy. The milder forms of psychosis and the neurotic and so-called psychoneurotic disturbances should also be treated by psychotherapy.

In the West, psychotherapy has gone through various phases during the last century. Even in the early part of the nineteenth century, mental disorders were regarded in the West as physiogenic or diseases of the brain by psychiatrists such as Griesinger

[8] Gordon W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1950), p. 76.

of Germany and French psychiatrists such as Morel and Magnan, in line with the Greek and other such traditions. Even the great psychiatrist Kraepelin of Germany, who made the greatest contribution in diagnostic technique, was influenced by this thought. It was Mesmer of Austria who, just before the French Revolution, introduced a new method of treating not only mental disturbances but also many physical disorders through psychogenic diagnosis and therapy. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Charcot, Janet, Kraepelin, and Bleuler contributed wonderfully to diagnostic methods. Charcot was the first man who went further than Mesmer in recognizing psychogenic causation of physical states as well as mental disturbances. Mesmer obscured his method of hypnotic control of other minds through mysterious processes. Both Charcot and his follower Janet studied many interesting cases of leg paralysis where individuals who could not move during the hours when they were awake walked at night in a sleeping state.[9] Joseph Breuer and Sigmund Freud of Vienna followed in the footsteps of these great French psychiatrists and introduced a revolutionary change both in diagnosis (following the classifications of Kraepelin) and in therapy.

The Adlerian method of treatment is a departure from the Freudian method. Adler suggests that the psychotherapist should first understand the reason for the sense of superiority through the presence of the fear of inferiority. His understanding of mental disturbances is based purely on his original thesis of the causation of mental problems, namely, the problem of self-expression. His cure is to explain to the client the nature of and reasons for the symptoms and thereby establish proper adjustment through the process of rethinking and rewilling.

Jung firmly believes in proper mental training after discovering the unconscious causation of mental disturbances. He is also a believer that during and after analysis the patient must be reeducated so that the individual's philosophy of life will be changed. His emphasis on the training process is extremely constructive, as we observe in his *Modern Man in Search of a Soul.*[10]

[9] P. Janet, *Major Symptoms of Hysteria* (2nd ed.; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920), pp. 28 and 198.

[10] C. G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1934), chaps. II, III, V, and especially XI, "Psychotherapy and the Clergy." See also *Psychology and Religion* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938).

Karen Horney departs from the orthodox Freudian method of psychoanalysis and calls her method self-analysis, although she recognizes that self-analysis is a difficult process for the patient. But she tries to remove his doubts and to establish the view that a man can observe himself and analyze his own unconscious motivations. She says:

> On theoretical grounds, then, I see no stringent reason why self-analysis should not be feasible. Granted that many people are too deeply entangled in their own problems to be able to analyze themselves; granted that self-analysis can never approximate the speed and accuracy of analytical treatment by an expert; granted that there are certain resistances that can be surmounted only with outside help—still, all of this is no proof that in principle the job cannot be done.[11]

She does not seem willing to keep the patient dependent on the analyst. Moreover, she emphasizes the development of inner strength and self-confidence.

Rogers' method of insight is similar to William Brown's autognosis. A counselor, as he terms the psychotherapist, helps the patient or client to gain insight into the repressed impulses within himself. Like Karen Horney, he emphasizes that the individual must play a great part in discovering his own problems. The counselor, through his non-directive counseling, helps the person to discover himself. Through this process of discovery the patient takes "self-initiated actions which move toward achieving the new goals."[12] To continue in Rogers' own words:

> These steps are of the most significant sort for growth, though they may relate only to minor issues. They create new confidence and independence in the client, and thus reinforce the new orientation which has come about through increased insight.[13]

Indian psychology can contribute to the field of psychotherapy. It is a development of the aspirations and hopes of the Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains, based on age-long experience transmitted in their cultural traditions. It is true that Indian psychology lays great emphasis on the study of religious experiences and the development of methods by which to attain them. Yet it also provides understanding of the different states of consciousness and

[11] Karen Horney, *Self-Analysis* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1942), p. 27.

[12] Carl R. Rogers, *Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1942), p. 216.

[13] *Ibid.*

therefore is able to make a definite therapeutic contribution in psychological problems. As stated previously, most ailments are functional, i.e. psychogenic. Since psychogenic illnesses originate in the mind, and the same is true of neurotic and psychotic cases, one should consider what therapeutic contributions Indian psychology can make to the field of psychogenic diseases, as well as to the integration of the emotions and personality. For the development of personality is of vital importance to a successful and happy life.

Indian psychology has grown out of religious concepts. That is the reason that it basically clarifies the philosophy of life. However, it does not neglect the different states of mind—conscious, unconscious, and superconscious. The objective of psychological pursuit in India is to reach the superconscious state through integration of the conscious and unconscious. Indian psychologists also give great emphasis to the purification and harmonization of the unconscious. According to Indian psychologists, the unconscious is not necessarily the storehouse of the dark side of life, nor of the conflict of the id and superego, nor again of the pleasure principle and death wish. It contains all the accumulated tendencies from individual past thoughts and actions, cultural background, and hereditary impressions and environmental conditions. Herein lies its therapeutic value and utility.

Every civilization has a dominant ideal or goal toward which it strives. The same is true of every individual. Indian psychologists, along with most of the Indian philosophers, say that the primary objective of life is the ultimate realization of the divinity of man, or the manifestation of the divinity that is already in him, as Swami Vivekananda puts it. This expression can be variously elaborated. It goes without saying that the whole emphasis of Indian psychology (Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain) is on the attainment of *paramartha* (supreme value), namely, the realization of God, *Atman,* or *Brahmàn,* or *Atmajnana* (self-knowledge), or the attainment of *Nirvana* of the Buddhists. According to the Indian psychologists and philosophers, the pursuit of happiness on the sense plane, the practical training for it, and even ethical culture or the use of practical methods are all secondary objectives of life. These are means for the attainment of the primary objective.

Hedonism or the pursuit of sense pleasure is not negated; it is rather subordinated to the supreme goal of life. It is a mistake to think that all Indian psychologists would advocate the negation of pleasure in the world. On the contrary, they all show us how to train ourselves so that we can have legitimate pleasure and harmonious living on the sense plane and at the same time move toward the supreme goal. As it is said in the *Katha Upanishad*:

> One thing is the good and (quite) different indeed is the pleasant; being of different requisitions, they both bind the Purusha. Good befalls him who follows the good, but he loses the goal, who chooses the pleasant.
>
> Both the good and the pleasant approach man; the wise one discriminates between the two having examined them (well). Yea, the wise man prefers the good to the pleasant, but the fool chooses the pleasant through avarice and attachment.[14]
>
> . . . .
>
> The senses of one who is always of unrestrained mind and devoid of right understanding, become uncontrollable like the wicked horses of a charioteer.
>
> The senses of him who is always of restrained mind and has right understanding, are controllable like the good horses of a charioteer.
>
> And he who is devoid of proper understanding, thoughtless and always impure, never attains that goal, and gets into the round of births and deaths.
>
> But he who is intelligent, ever pure and with the mind controlled, reaches that goal whence none is born again.[15]

In the Dhammapada (a Buddhistic treatise) it is declared:

> He who gives himself to vanity, and does not give himself to meditation, forgetting the real aim (of life) and grasping at pleasure, will in time envy him who has exerted himself in meditation.[16]

It is said in *Uttaradhyayana* (of the Jaina tradition):

> By renouncing pleasure he attains freedom from false longing, whereby he becomes compassionate, humble, free from sorrow, and destroys karma produced by delusion regarding conduct.[17]

Indian psychologists give psychological training so that the causes of mental disturbances may be eliminated. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*

[14] *Katha Upanishad* II: 1-2.
[15] *Ibid.*, III: 5-8.
[16] *Dhammapada*, trans. Max Müller, Vol. X, *Sacred Books of the East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), chap. XIV: 209.
[17] *Uttaradhyayana*, discourse XXIV.

Sri Krishna says that when the mental conditions are disturbed there is no peace; and without peace there is no happiness.

> But the self-controlled man, moving among objects with senses under restraint, and free from attraction and aversion, attains to tranquillity.
> In tranquillity, all sorrow is destroyed. For the intellect of him who is tranquil-minded, is soon established in firmness.
> No knowledge (of the Self) has the unsteady. Nor has he meditation. To the unmeditative there is no peace. And how can one without peace have happiness?[18]

It might seem that these philosophical and religious ideals will create more and more tension, as Freud and many of his followers think, by creating a strong superego which represses the natural and normal tendencies of man. Indian psychologists, however, do not advocate the repression of human tendencies. Rather, they emphasize the control and transformation of emotional urges that create tension, conflict, frustration, and unhappiness. In *Raja Yoga* Patanjali says:

> The fine Samskaras [subtle impressions] are to be conquered by resolving them into their causal state. By meditation, their (gross) modifications are to be rejected.[19]

The first two steps of *Raja Yoga* are clear indications of the emphasis of Indian psychology. *Yama* (ethical observation and mental control) and *niyama* (physical cleansing and dietetic restrictions and some forms of mental training) are purificatory processes for higher mental development. Rather than repression, these are methods for changing the course of the emotions. Krishna, in the *Bhagavad-Gita,* Buddhists, in the *Dhammapada,* and Jainas, in the *Uttaradhyayana,* and other Indian teachers of different traditions made clear that they did not mean repression but rather transformation and redirection of the emotions. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda also in recent times show how to change the course of emotions and direct them to God. Sri Ramakrishna says:

> . . . So long as these passions [lust, anger, etc.] are directed toward the world and its objects, they behave as enemies; but when they are

[18] *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita,* trans. Swami Swarupananda (5th ed.; Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas: Advaita Ashrama, 1933), chap. II: 64-66.
[19] *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* II: 10-11.

directed toward God, they become the best friends of man, for then they lead him unto God.[20]

And according to Swami Vivekananda:

> . . . The central secret is, therefore, to know that the various passions and feelings, and emotions in the human heart are not wrong in themselves; only they have to be carefully controlled and given a higher and higher direction, until they attain the very highest condition of excellence. The highest direction is that which takes us to God. . . .[21]

Indian psychologists thus take the primary and secondary emotions of man as given facts and try to use them for higher development.

They realize that as long as man accepts hedonism and pursues pleasure as the primary objective of life, frustration and tension are inevitable. As it is observed, the objects of sense enjoyment change; and man, himself the subject of enjoyment, also changes. When he is a child, he enjoys dolls and toys to the utmost. In adolescence, he enjoys living, moving companions. Again in maturity he finds pleasure in other functions of life. His interests change, and the world that he experiences also changes. His friends and relatives are different; social and economic conditions are in a state of flux. If he thinks that in this finite world he can have continuous sense pleasure as he likes, he is bound to be frustrated and full of tension.

In his book, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* Freud takes a fatalistic attitude. He says: "I cannot believe in the existence of such [an impulse toward perfection] and I see no way of preserving the pleasing illusion."[22] Again he says: "Substitution or reaction formations and sublimations avail nothing toward relaxing the continual tension."[23] It seems that Freud and his followers, such as Karl Menninger and others, lead the people into a blind alley with their theory that the pleasure and suicide urges are basic in man. If that be the case, there is no hope for

[20] *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna* (3rd ed.; Mylapore, Madras: The Ramakrishna Math, 1925), chap. X: 302.

[21] *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas: Advaita Ashrama, 1932), III, 78. (This reference shall hereafter be known as *Works.*)

[22] Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (London: International Psychoanalytic Press, 1922), p. 52.

[23] *Ibid.,* p. 53.

success in the removal of tension and frustration by methods prescribed in the Western systems of psychotherapy advocated by Freud, Menninger,[24] and others.

Indian psychologists declare that hedonism is not the primary objective of life. Moreover, hedonism and inordinate desire for satisfaction in sense pleasure will keep up tension in the mind and will lead to frustration; this is set forth in the teachings of Sri Krishna, Patanjali, Sri Ramakrishna, and others. The great Christian mystics and religious leaders take the same point of view. Instead of creating conflict and tension, Indian psychology removes the causes of these mental disorders by furnishing the religious ideal as the supreme goal of life. In clinical and counseling experiences, it becomes clear that without changing the outlook on life from hedonism and the pleasure principle to the religious ideal one cannot make any durable therapeutic contribution to cases of neurosis and psychosis.

Overemphasis on sense pleasure as the supreme goal of life in the modern world is creating more and more mental disturbances, to the extent of actually frightening people. Therefore there is a real need for understanding religious psychology—both Indian and Western. It is interesting to note what Professor O. Hobart Mowrer, University of Illinois, has to say after studying an enormous number of cases both at Harvard University and the University of Illinois. He writes:

> In therapy it is therefore true that there is a kind of unlearning that must occur—unlearning of the "skills" and strategies by which conditioning, whether by society or by conscience, has been warded off. These strategies must be activated in the therapy, but they must then be shown to be ineffective and, indeed, unnecessary. The way is then opened for the more basic kind of emotional learning against which past problem-solving behavior has served as a protection. Religious leaders are fond of saying that a sinner can be saved only if he "opens his heart to God." Perhaps we can appropriately paraphrase this statement by saying that a neurotic can be cured only if he "opens his heart" to the great moral teachings and emotional values of his society.[25]

Dr. Fritz Kunkel gives a pertinent statement: "Both psychoanalysis and individual psychology fall short. Religious psychol-

[24] Karl A. Menninger, *Man against Himself* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc., 1938). See also *Love against Hate* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1942).

[25] O. Hobart Mowrer, "Learning Theory and the Neurotic Paradox," *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, XVIII, No. 4 (October 1948), 605.

ogy is necessary."[26] Professor Allport has an interesting reflection to make in this connection:

> The single fact that weighs against this wholly secular solution is the ever insistent truth that what a man believes to a large extent determines his mental and physical health. What he believes about his business, his associates, his wife, his immediate future, is important; even more so, what he believes about life in general, its purpose and design. Religious belief, simply because it deals with fundamentals, often turns out to be the most important belief of all.[27]

An egocentric, selfish attitude in life necessarily creates certain tendencies in a person which become strong barriers to harmonious interpersonal relationships. Egocentric people do not know how to adjust themselves even in their intimate relationship with others, either with other egocentrics or with altruists; nor do they have any real understanding of how to adapt themselves to the varying conditions of life. Consequently, at difficult stages and conditions of life, they become absolutely helpless. It is noticed that in adolescence and middle age people find it hard to adapt themselves to their own physical changes and to changing environmental conditions. They develop a considerable number of mental and nerve ailments. By furnishing a sound philosophy of life, with the attainment of divinity and knowledge of God or Self-knowledge as the supreme objective, Indian psychology removes the causes of maladjustment, as it gives a background against which a man can minimize the importance of the varying conditions of life. It also teaches him that he should have harmonious interpersonal relationships, since various people are the manifestations of God or the Self, and consequently their interests are not basically different. In fact, this attitude strikes at the root of egocentricity which is the chief cause of maladjustment in life. So this is one of the most important contributions of Indian psychology to the psychology of adjustment as it is discussed in Western countries by social psychologists and psychiatrists.

Human beings have such primary urges as self-preservation, self-expression, sex-expression, knowledge, gregarious expression, and so forth. They also have secondary emotions such as fear, anger, envy, jealousy, and so forth. Indian psychologists do not

[26] Fritz Kunkel, *In Search of Maturity* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), p. 34.
[27] Allport, *The Individual and His Religion*, p. 79.

claim that any one of these is the solitary urge of the human mind. Like McDougall they accept the existence of divergent urges and emotions operating in the human mind and they firmly believe that there is a supreme urge under which all urges are subordinated. McDougall declares that there is a "master sentiment" which controls all other sentiments like the "commander-in-chief of the army."[28] In his *Social Psychology,* he seems to differ radically from the Indian idea of the supreme goal in his interpretation of the master urge. However, he agrees that a man "has not strong will and character in the full sense, but rather what would be called specialized character."[29] Unfortunately, McDougall could not understand or find the supreme goal or master sentiment to which the primary urges are related, in spite of his breadth of viewpoint and sincere efforts. His hormic or purposive theory should be appreciated, however.

On the other hand, William Brown of London, in his *Science and Personality,* seems to be one with the Indian psychologists in his thinking. According to him:

> This supreme sentiment, named by McDougall the "master-sentiment," will be a system of instinctive emotional dispositions centred about one supreme object. Such an object will be as general as possible and as all-inclusive as possible. What should the object be? Clearly it should be the universe as a perfected system, as the full realization of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True.[30]

The viewpoint of Gestalt also cannot solve the problem of mental disturbances, in spite of its value in stressing wholes in the mental life. It is not specific enough. On the other hand, Indian psychologists declare that the "master sentiment" is the desire for an abiding happiness which transcends the sense plane. Man seeks it, thinking erroneously that through the primary urges he will have it. So it is said in one of the Upanishads: "There is joy in the infinite; there is no joy in the finite."[31] Buddhism gives us the same idea: "The gift of the law exceeds all

[28]William McDougall, *Outline of Abnormal Psychology* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1926), p. 546.

[29]William McDougall, *Social Psychology* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1918), pp. 266-267.

[30]William Brown, *Science and Personality* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 79.

[31]*Chhandogya Upanishad,* chap. VII, sec. 23.

gifts; the sweetness of the law exceeds all sweetness; the delight in the law exceeds all delight; the extinction of thirst overcomes all pain."[32]

This indeed is a special contribution of Indian psychology and of both Eastern and Western mysticism. This viewpoint has tremendous therapeutic value. Unless a man accepts it as the ideal of life there is no possibility for the permanent removal of his mental tension and frustration. So long as his mind remains attracted to the sense plane as the supreme goal of life, there will be inevitable mental conflict, tension, and frustration.

Some of the Indian thinkers suggest that one should cultivate the spirit of repulsion, but not repression, toward the objects of the senses. This is regarded by many Western scholars, no doubt, as a negative attitude toward life and world. Nevertheless, in Buddhistic; Jaina, and some of the Hindu traditions this method has been used to remove extreme forms of selfish desire for sense enjoyment.[33] It is accepted by all Indian religious and philosophical thinkers, as well as by great Western mystics, that attachment for objects of the senses distracts the mind and makes it tense, creating inevitable frustration and consequent functional diseases and mental disturbances.

There are other Indian thinkers who suggest the positive method, namely, subordination of the desire for the pursuit of happiness on the sense plane in order to attain the supreme goal of realization of the Infinite. Their idea is to see the Ultimate Reality in all. It is said in *Isha Upanishad*:

> Whatever there is changeable in this ephemeral world; all this must be enveloped by the Lord. . . . Only performing ordained works should one desire to live one hundred years. Thus and in no other way can one be free from the taint of evil deeds as long as you are fond of your human life.[34]

According to many of the Indian teachers, one should cultivate a positive thought of the divine in all objects and feel the presence of God or the Self in all; the disturbing mental reactions and the tensions are then overcome. Following the lead of the

[32] *Dhammapada*, trans. Max Müller, XXIV: 354.

[33] Henry Clarke Warren, *Buddhism in Translation* ("Harvard Oriental Series," III [Cambridge: Harvard University, 1896]), chap. I, "Visuddhi Magga"; chap. XII, "Digha-Nikaya," and "Visuddhi Magga."

[34] *Isha Upanishad*, verses 1-2.

Isha Upanishad, the *Gita,* in clarifying the idea of performing work in the spirit of duty, emphasizes the efficacy of this so-called positive method without negating life and the world. In fact, the *Karma Yoga* of the *Gita* shows how lower human propensities can be transformed into higher qualities.

Indian psychology is not merely conceptual or theoretical. Its therapeutic value is in its teaching of various methods for mental integration. It prescribes systems of physical and mental discipline which gradually stabilize the mind and integrate the emotions. After the preparatory ethical steps of *yama* and *niyama* of Patanjali, certain physical processes are introduced. In *yama* and *niyama,* Hindu psychologists not only give us ethical training and redirection of the emotions; they also show us how some of the disturbed emotions can be transformed by cultivating opposite tendencies. Patanjali declares that positive, constructive thoughts and emotions should be cultivated in order to obstruct and remove the disturbing mental states. He says: "Friendship, mercy, gladness and indifference being thought of in regard to subjects happy, unhappy, good, and evil respectively, pacify the mind."[35] In his commentary on this Aphorism, Swami Vivekananda states:

> We must have friendship for all. We must be merciful toward those who are in misery. When the people are happy we must be happy and to the wicked we must be indifferent. . . . If the subject is a good one we shall feel friendly to it; if the subject of thought is one that is miserable we must be merciful toward the subject. If it is good we must be glad; if it is evil we must be indifferent.[36]

Then he says: "These attitudes of mind to different subjects that come before it will make the mind peaceful."[37]

In these two steps, *yama* and *niyama,* there are certain dietary regulations and methods for purifying the elementary physical functions, so that the nervous system can be strengthened and quieted for the still higher steps of *Raja Yoga.* The third and fourth steps of *Raja Yoga*—the practice of comfortable posture (*asana*) and breathing exercises (*pranayama*)—are meant for the relaxation of the neuro-muscular system and for quelling the

[35] *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* I: 33.
[36] *Works,* I, 222.
[37] *Ibid.*

restlessness of the mind. Recently, in America, a few psychotherapists have started giving thought training and relaxation exercises, as they realize that most people do not know how to relax the neuro-muscular system. But these practices are not deep enough to do effective work. Indian psychologists anticipated all these frailties centuries ago and instituted sound methods for relaxation so that the mind could function properly in the practice of deep concentration. This is another unique contribution of Indian psychology to psychotherapy. Patanjali and the Tantrika schools were fully aware of the necessity of psychophysical practices for physical health and religious growth. Psychotherapy is ancient. Buddhist and Jaina teachers and Alwars and Nayanars and other such leaders belonging to different religious groups in India are one in the emphasis on mental discipline and exercises.

Indian psychologists also prescribe definite methods for the practice of concentration (*dharana*) and meditation (*dhyana*) which are essential for the development of will power. The various methods prescribed by the Western schools of thought lack considerably in the technique of developing dynamic functioning of the will, in spite of their ameliorating effect. Psychoanalysis, self-analysis of various types, autognosis, and insight no doubt help in the understanding of the causes of mental problems, and may often help in removing a certain amount of tension. Yet they do not seem to unify the will. Permanent cure can only be attained in the majority of the cases by the integration of the will and the manifestation of its power of concentration on the divine, or by the methods prescribed by other teachers of India. In *Uttaradhyayana,* of the Jaina tradition, it is declared: "By consciousness of thought he attains stability of mind."[38] Buddha's fourth truth, namely, "The Way of Cessation of Sorrows," emphasizes the necessity for stabilizing the mind through right comprehension, right effort, and other steps leading to the practice of meditation (*dhyana*).

The practice of concentration and meditation—as prescribed by the *Svetasvatara Upanishad,* Sri Krishna, Patanjali, and modern teachers like Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, and others—is essential. Many of the Tantrika schools, such as Shatchakranirupana, also advocate definite prac-

[38] *Uttaradhyayana,* discourse XXIX.

tices. (Methods prescribed by the great Christians, such as St. Ignatius Loyola, should also be mentioned, even though they are not used by the Western psychotherapists.) The primary objective of these practices is the knowledge of God or the realization of the Ultimate Reality or the Buddhistic *nirvana*. Yet these practices integrate the mind and unify the will, bringing out its hidden, unmanifested powers. Indian psychology excels in prescribing methods for the integration of the will, emotions, and thought through concentration and meditation. It is observed in case studies that disorganized and disturbed mental conditions are gradually stabilized, harmonized, and unified by systematic practice. Apart from the knowledge of God, the therapeutic value of these exercises is immense.[39]

It stands to reason that when there is a psychosomatic relationship or psychophysical parallelism the stabilization of the mind will in turn stabilize the physical functions of the person. Mind for the time being functions through the nervous system. Consequently, when there is a change in the mind there is a change in the nervous system and vice versa. So the Indian psychologists suggest that one should have certain regulations for food and drink in order to keep the body—especially the nervous system—strong and healthy. Nerve strength is needed for the strength of the mind. On the other hand, certain types of mental training are essential for physical health. Hindu and other schools of Indian psychology recognize these facts and accordingly prescribe the methods of harmonizing the mental and physical functions of man.

When a person practices concentration for a little while, his hidden unconscious tendencies (or *samskaras*) become clear to him. The Indian method of strengthening the mind enables a man to have insight into the cause of his mental tension. Apart from that, his unconscious urges are gradually and spontaneously eliminated in and through the practice of concentration.

The processes prescribed by Indian psychology for strengthening the will and illumining the mind are also unique contribu-

[39] Swami Brahmananda, a great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, time and again declared that when the mind is stabilized through concentration and meditation and other such practices, even the body and nervous system become healthy.

tions to the field of psychology and psychotherapy. The West can be greatly benefited by the knowledge of these methods.

Disrupted personalities of men and women with tension and conflict cannot easily practice concentration, for they are unable to concentrate the mind on anything even for a minute. According to Indian psychology, they are given a divine symbol or statue or picture for their object of concentration. They are also given a method for recapitulating the incidents of the lives of divine personalities, as the Vaishnava teachers of India prescribe. The repetition of the name of God, as suggested by Tantrikas, Vaishnavas, and Saivas, is helpful in the beginning of the practice of concentration. It will be proper to mention here that the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox Church also advocate the repetition of the name of God. These and other such exercises gradually remove the mental disturbances and unify the emotions.

Along with the therapeutic value of Indian psychology, there is a dynamic effect on the development of personality. Indian psychologists believe that the personality is integrated only when the total mind is unified and harmonized. An integrated personality can alone help others in their emotional disturbances. An Indian *guru,* or any spiritual teacher, should not only be an instructor of philosophy, theology, and conceptual religion; he should also be an integrated personality. He must not have disturbing emotional conflicts and tension. The qualifications of a spiritual teacher include emotional stability, without which he cannot impart spiritual knowledge to his disciple, or *ṣhisya.* If anyone wants effectively to help a disturbed person, he himself must be free from mental disturbances. The Buddhistic teaching in *Saddharma Pundarika* declares:

> Let the sage first, for some time, coerce his thoughts, exercise meditation with complete absorption, and correctly perform all that is required for attaining spiritual insight, and then, after rising (from his pious meditation), preach with unquailing mind.[40]

Psychotherapists must be emotionally stable persons. It is often noticed that a man of tension and frustration attempts to advise others. Indian psychology recognizes that such persons cannot give durable help in therapeutic work. On the other hand, it is

[40] *Saddharma Pundarika,* chap. XIII.

often observed that if any mentally disorganized person even remains in the company of a spiritually stable person, he tends to become stabilized and his tension vanishes.

Hindu and other schools of Indian psychology can make a tremendous contribution to the development of personality through the integration of the emotions and development of will, both of which are essential for harmonious and peaceful living as well as for spiritual realization. Indian teachers of *Raja Yoga* or the psychological method discovered the technique of mental development in its totality—emotion, volition, and cognition—as they realized that mere conceptual knowledge does not integrate the total personality.

CHAPTER II

How to Overcome Anxiety

ANXIETY is one of the greatest problems disturbing most human beings. Psychologically speaking there is a difference between the secondary emotion of fear, as a reaction from any of the primitive urges, and the emotion of anxiety. Fear is based on actual knowledge of a thing or incident that may threaten a person's existence, self-expression, pursuit of knowledge, or any other such primary urge or instinct; while anxiety generally arises as a result of apprehension of something unknown which seems to create conflict, tension, and disturbance in the primitive urges. The cause of anxiety may remain in the unconscious mind, so that a person may not always be fully aware of the cause. The human mind is distressed by certain conditions of life which create mental tension. There should not be two opinions among the psychologists and psychiatrists regarding the fact that anxiety and apprehension constitute one of the most disturbing problems that they face, creating all sorts of disorders such as insomnia and such functional diseases as heart trouble, circulatory disturbances, and glandular difficulties.

Many symptoms of neuroses can be traced to anxiety. Neurotic people, in turn, show more and more anxiety, which creates a vicious circle. Such symptoms have become a social issue as they affect interpersonal relationships. Some of the social problems like aggression can also be traced to the same source. Because anxiety is a social problem, modern psychologists and psychiatrists are trying to find a method for overcoming it. They feel that if they are successful in this they can remove one of the greatest causes of human suffering and agony.

Generally speaking, anxiety neuroses are common in the middle class and wealthy class. Mostly, the poorer people cannot afford them; they have to work hard and they have little leisure time. But many poor are nonetheless neurotic. Those who are financially comfortable should have no anxiety regarding their creature comforts; besides their wealth they have everything—beautiful homes, servants, power, position. Yet somehow or other they still have anxiety because they have not found the purpose of their lives.

Anxiety is present also in many young scholars in the universities. This is not due to any lack in avenues of self-expression. It is because they feel that they must be like Professor Dewey, Professor Hocking, or President Conant and Dr. Compton; they have formed unrealistic ideals. In the competitive world some are afraid to try to attain their goal; others try and fail to achieve what they desire. In either instance, they become disturbed. Many serious scholars develop anxiety because their positions become jeopardized or because they cannot get what they desire.

If we recall the early part of our lives and analyze our experiences we find that when any of the primary biological urges were threatened we began to develop anxiety, for certain biological reasons. When a child realizes that he is in an unknown situation he becomes apprehensive and anxious. Recently, we heard an interesting story in this connection. A mother was putting her young son to bed. She kissed him, bade him good night, and put out the light. The boy began to cry, so the mother returned and asked him why he was crying. "I don't like to be alone in the dark," was his reply. The mother said to him: "Oh, now, why should you be alone? God is here with you." The little boy said: "Then I want to see His face." He was not satisfied with an invisible, unknown God. He wanted to see the visible familiar face of his mother so that he would be free from anxiety and apprehension in the dark. He could not depend on something intangible.

Babies cry the moment they are hungry. They are impelled to cry because there is a sense of insecurity in their hunger. The growth of the child presupposes to some extent this kind of anxiety for his physical existence. Biologists, especially of the Darwinian school, tell us that the struggle for existence is in-

herent in the living cell, the living being. Consequently, it may be admitted that a certain type of anxiety is also essential for the development of an individual, but only as a means to life, not as a frustration.

Anxiety and apprehension can also be traced to certain religious attitudes. Many religious leaders and some psychologists of religion declare that religion begins with a kind of guilt consciousness. But often this consciousness of sin and guilt creates neurotic behavior patterns. When it is overemphasized, the disproportionately cultivated sense of sin positively harms the personality. An example is seen in the case of a young woman of thirty who developed an anxiety neurosis of such an extent that she was unable to carry out the ordinary duties of married life. When she was six or seven years old, she was told by her mother and religious instructors that some of her childhood habits were sinful. She was also told that when a little girl indulged in lying, coveting, and quarreling with other children, or committing some of the naughty acts of childhood, she would be punished by God. This made a deep impression on her mind and she would often remain awake and almost paralyzed in bed at night in fear of damnation. When she grew up and was married, she lived a normal life with her husband until the time of the depression. Her husband had considerable financial difficulty which brought to her mind her old childhood anxiety. She had a few treatments from a psychiatrist. Unfortunately, she was not able to overcome her anxiety and she became disintegrated. It was difficult for her to go anywhere alone. In fact, she was brought to us by a young friend who had to escort her around. After a number of visits, we disclosed the cause of her terrible mental depression and her anxiety neurosis. She was advised to change her outlook on life and its values. She was also told that God is not a ruthless, tyrannical Being, who punishes us for our little transgressions, but God is a loving Being. We explained that while man suffers from the consequences of his own wrongdoings, he also has the possibility of changing his thoughts and actions. It was emphasized that this young woman was inseparably connected with the all-loving God who is ever ready to render His help and love when anyone wants to make a change in his or her life. She realized that she had not to be afraid of the wrath

of God because of her childhood habits. She was also helped to realize that financial security is not the main concern of life; it is only a means to the goal of love and knowledge of God. She was given systematic practices of relaxation and meditation which gradually strengthened her will power. The change of her outlook on life and her new attitude toward God, coupled with the strengthening of will power through the practice of concentration, gave her new hope and aspiration, and her anxiety was gradually removed. When this young woman reoriented her religious attitude, and understood the place of wrongdoing in life, she gained normality. This and many such cases indicate that anxiety can be caused by wrong understanding and wrong emphasis of the religious attitude and sense of guilt even though its cause may not operate in the conscious mind.

Failure in some phases of life can create depression and anxiety. An internationally known scholar failed in his marriage after having a few children. The dissolution of the marriage affected him very much. It caused a deep apprehension about marriage. When he married a second time, he developed an extreme form of anxiety neurosis which almost paralyzed him in his marital relationship. This marriage would have been a colossal failure but for the wisdom of his second wife. She understood the reason for this man's nervousness and other symptoms. With deep understanding, patience, and love she actually reassured the man of his success in marriage. Gradually, all of the symptoms of the neurosis vanished. A child was born to them and they remained happily married. This case shows that just as the negative attitude toward life and the negative emotional reactions of husbands, wives, friends, or relatives can create psychological and physical disturbances in others, similarly, positive and encouraging emotional expressions can build up a healthy personality.

A young scholar was inspired by the achievements of contemporary thinkers. Being anxious to attain a great position in his early youth, he disturbed his mental equilibrium in such a way that he developed neurotic symptoms. He also developed some of the behavior patterns typical of neurotic persons. By mental training and discipline along with an understanding of the proper values of life and the meaning of real achievement,

he was helped to get rid of the cause, and consequently of the symptoms, of neurosis.

Naturally, social scientists, religious leaders, and psychotherapists are seeking the remedy for anxiety. Sociologists are trying to give us a better understanding of society, while some social and natural scientists are anxious to remove the physical limitations of man by using the forces of nature for his comfort. They also want to eliminate some of the evils of industrial civilization. Professor Mayo and others have contributed immensely to the betterment of the industrial situation by working to remove the anxiety and apprehension of labor and management.[1]

It has been found by research groups in this country, who are studying the evils of industrial civilization, that the industries, which were set up to remove the causes of anxiety and apprehension by producing the necessities of life with the output of consumers goods, are creating instead various social problems. Suicide, delinquency, alcoholism, and other moral and social evils have become prevalent.[2] Even a casual perusal of the reports will convince us that the method of mere industrialization is not enough.

Many people take to alcoholism and drugs because of anxiety. We have already discussed the professional man who developed a sense of guilt due to malpractice in his work and took to excessive drinking. Instead of alleviating the neurotic condition, alcohol disorganized his personality. Many similar instances are known.

Merely fulfilling physical requirements does not solve the problem of anxiety. If it did, America would not have so many cases of "anxiety neurosis," since this country is the last word in post-Renaissance Western civilization and has practically all that modern science can provide for the pursuit of happiness on the physical plane of existence. The people desire more and more commodities instead of being satisfied with what they have. This gradually creates a peculiar sense of anxiety in the mind and makes man increasingly selfish.

[1] Elton Mayo, *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1945).

[2] Elton Mayo, *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933).

Although the psychiatrists and psychologists are trying to remove anxiety, it must be admitted that, in spite of their noble attempts, they are failing to attain their objective. Sociologists and psychiatrists of different schools of thought are to be admired for their intentions yet they do not touch the basic problem. They give symptomatic treatment without going to the root of the difficulty.

The rate of increase in functional ailments is alarming. What is happening to our human society? People now have almost anything they want—higher wages and all the comforts that science can give. Yet the problem of apprehension and anxiety has not been eliminated. There is something wrong with the very basis, structure, and outlook of this type of civilization, if this problem still persists.

If you had gone to Europe and Asia before the war, you would have seen the difference between the standards of living in America and those places. Even in England, which until recently was the greatest imperialistic country in the world, you could see the difference between the comforts of American and of British life. If anxiety could be removed by applied science, the American people would have no such suffering. However, just the opposite is true; mental disturbances are increasing by leaps and bounds. They are major topics of discussion in any medical meeting. A president of the American Psychiatric Association reported to us during World War II that the cost for the care of mental cases resulting from the war could not be met by the taxpayers. It is a threatening situation.

There is an inherent defect in this anxious outlook on life. It creates a desire for more and more possessions. There is dissatisfaction in the mind before a person achieves what he desires. He wants a good living; he makes a good living; but he wants more than that. He may become a millionaire but he is not satisfied; he wants to become a multi-millionaire. If he becomes a multi-millionaire, he wants to control others. He wants to establish a monopoly, then a cartel. Still he is not satisfied but wishes to control the industries of other countries. And so it goes. The last two wars were fought because of selfish desires for more and more power, position, money, and economic opportunity. The late Senator Borah said after World War I that one group of

thieves stole the world and tried to keep what they took; another group of thieves were going to get it just before America joined World War II.

History proves to us that whenever people subscribe to this grasping outlook on life, they gradually destroy themselves. This inherent defect is known to have been prevalent in previous civilizations which disintegrated. Rome is an outstanding example. We have no reason to believe that we can escape the same fate under similar conditions, even though our sociologists, psychologists, and others are trying to remove the evils of modern living. Twenty years ago there was an extensive humanistic movement in the United States and Europe, but it failed to touch the life of the people. Even today humanists are trying to remedy the ills of society but they cannot do it. And why should a man serve his neighbor and refrain from taking everything for himself as long as the greatest amount of pleasure is the objective of life?

Sociologists say that people cannot be happy or keep their money unless they share with others. Professor Mayo and his contemporaries state that there must be better understanding between labor and management; otherwise, business and industry will be seriously affected by disputes and strikes, and the American people will not be able to compete with the totalitarian countries. To avoid disputes and strikes some of the sociologists and progressive economists advocate higher wages, social security, and other such measures for the comfort and welfare of the labor group. People should also give to others some share of their income or investments, if possible. But why should a man share for the sake of expediency? He may do so at times, as during a war, but this will increase and not decrease his anxiety and tension. World history reveals that unless the very basis of selfishness is removed, man does not and cannot work for others without having mental dissatisfaction. It is a peculiar situation. Unless the ideals and aspirations of the human mind are changed, there is no possible solution for the struggle between labor and management, between the feudal chief and the working man, between the haves and have-nots.

We admit that anxiety neuroses can be traced to unregulated primitive biological urges and unadjusted social conditions; but

the remedy is not to be found in uncontrolled satisfaction of primary urges or in egocentric, selfish social behavior. Our suggestion is that primary biological urges as well as problems arising from social conditions can be regulated and adjusted to eliminate the cause of anxiety from the human personality. This can be accomplished by shifting our outlook from satisfaction on the physical plane to satisfaction on the ethical and spiritual plane. Civilizations which were based on the religious ideal eliminated the cause of anxiety because they did not have sensate culture. As Professor Sorokin emphasizes, sensate culture is bound to create certain problems which cause anxiety and dissatisfaction. Swami Vivekananda also says:

> In the West, they are trying to solve the problem how much a man can possess, and we are trying here [in India] to solve the problem on how little a man can live. This struggle and difference will go on for some centuries. But if history has any truth in it, and if prognostications ever prove true, it must be that those who train themselves to live on the least and control themselves well, will in the end gain the battle, and that those who run after enjoyment and luxury, however vigorous they seem for the moment, will have to die and become annihilated. There are times in the history of a man's life, nay, in the history of the lives of nations, when a sort of world-weariness becomes painfully predominant. It seems that such a tide of world-weariness has come upon the Western world. . . . many, nay most of the cultured men and women there, are already weary of this competition, this struggle, this brutality of their commercial civilisation, and they are looking forward towards something better. . . . They have found out that no amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. It is a change of the soul itself for the better, that alone will cure the evils of life.[3]

The religious civilizations of Christian, Hindu, and Buddhistic types emphasized the unfoldment of the inner possibilities of man instead of the outer satisfaction of the biological urges. It might be construed that they advocated otherworldliness and used religion as an opiate or escape. A deeper analysis will prove that any such charge is not true. The religious outlook does not necessarily advocate giving up the pursuit of pleasure on the sense plane; it only gives a proper place to the different urges. The problem of anxiety arises when any of the urges are out of balance with the others and become disproportionate by making

[3] *Works*, III, 181-182.

man feel inadequate, insecure, and futile. Religious philosophy furnishes the background against which the various urges can be balanced. It is encouraging to note what Professor O. Hobart Mowrer, a clinical psychologist, has to say about the cause and remedy of anxiety:

> Many sources of present evidence indicate that most—perhaps all—neurotic human beings suffer, not because they are unduly inhibited as regards their biological drives, but because they have disavowed and repudiated their own moral strivings. Anxiety, I believe, comes, not from repressed sexuality or pent-up hatred, but from a denial and defiance of the forces of conscience.[4]

We knew an elderly gentleman in India who had a struggle in his early life because of family bereavements. He was a self-made man, having established himself in a high rank in the legal profession. But he never neglected his religious duties and spiritual practices. When his grandchildren were born and his older son became his successor in his legal work, he entrusted the duties of his family to the son. This elderly gentleman retired from his worldly activities and devoted himself to spiritual practices. It was amazing then and it is still amazing to remember how much he grew in spirituality. This was so because he placed worldly achievements and enjoyments in a position subordinate to the religious ideal. He had real satisfaction in life and his noble example inspired many young persons and children. We never noticed any kind of anxiety in this gentleman under any circumstances. The secret of his peaceful state of mind lay in his proper evaluation of life and consequent intense spiritual practices in the form of meditation, worship, and other such exercises. His life shows also that one does not have to give up or negate the pursuit of pleasure in order to be free from anxiety and apprehension; rather one has to set them in proper relation to the pursuit of the religious ideal.

If a man will change his outlook on life and can be convinced that he has latent possibilities for happiness in social adjustment and higher spiritual unfoldment, he can eliminate anxiety neuroses caused by frustration, insecurity and a sense of guilt. Mentally disturbed persons with anxiety neuroses should be helped

[4] O. Hobart Mowrer, "Biological vs. Moral Frustration in Personality Disturbances," *Progressive Education,* XXVI, (January, 1949), p. 67.

to understand that they are more than just straws in the mighty current of life. They should be taught the latent dynamic possibilities of the human soul. As Swami Vivekananda declares: "Each soul is potentially divine." We have seen in many cases that this conviction constitutes the starting point of change in the lives of the individuals.

Mere intellectual conceptions and convictions do not solve the problem of anxiety neurosis. Clients should simultaneously be trained in the practice of relaxation, concentration, and meditation, as the new conviction of the divinity of man is developed. Those who are not willing to accept this point of view can think that they are children of God and, as such, inseparably connected with Him. The practice of concentration on God brings out the latent power of mind in the form of will power.[5] As the will is developed by these practices all symptoms of anxiety neuroses vanish. The individuals become transformed.

If we want an idealistic civilization, we must focus the mind on the permament Reality within us. Some may call it God; others may call it Soul. It does not matter what name is given. The point is that unless we give attention to that supreme goal of life, to the understanding of the higher self of man, there is no possibility of conquering the lower desires. There are some thinkers, the humanists, who hold that ethical development is possible without the thought of God. However, we find that it is not normally possible. It is true that humanism of the Buddhistic type produced great integrated personalities .However, their emphasis was on the eightfold path: (1) right belief, (2) right aspiration, (3) right speech, (4) right conduct, (5) right mode of livelihood, (6) right effort, (7) right meditation, (8) right realization. Consequently, right living was essential on the basis of the higher values of life.

Even the Buddhists of an earlier period realized that ethical idealism was not practical for the vast majority of the people; they put Buddha in the place of God or the all-loving Being out of psychological necessity. So we are compelled to think that lower passions cannot be changed unless the mind is directed to higher planes of existence. As Buddha says: "The gods even

[5] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946), chap. V.

envy him whose senses, like horses well broken in by the driver, have been subdued, who is free from pride, and free from appetites."[6] In the *Bhagavad-Gita* Sri Krishna says that as long as attention is intensely given to sense pleasures, there is no possibility of peace of mind. He gives the warning: "The turbulent senses, O son of Kunti, do violently snatch away the mind of even a wise man, striving after perfection"; and, "His wisdom is steady, whose senses are under control."[7] Jesus Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, declares: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."[8] The word purity has deep meaning. As long as the mind is scattered and full of waves due to inordinate desires and longing, there is no peace. Sri Ramakrishna says that the reflection of one's face cannot be seen in the lake if the lake is dirty or full of ripples.[9] Neither is there any reflection from the mirror which is covered with dust. Similarly, we cannot see the reflection of our soul or the real or higher self unless the mind is transparent. When the mind is full of passions and desires, there is no possibility for the reflection of God in it. That is the reason that inordinate tendencies have to be controlled, in order that a person may achieve the knowledge of the Reality.

Challenging questions arise. Is the religious attitude toward the senses otherworldly? Does religion mean negation of life and the world? One of the great European thinkers, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, writes, in his *Indian Thought and Its Development,* that Oriental religions, particularly Hinduism, follow a method of rejection of life and the world.[10] He also does not spare Jesus in this respect. Our answer to such critics is that Buddha, Krishna, and Christ did not advocate negation of life and the world. What they wanted us to do was to take the world as it really is, not as we would like to have it. Vedantic teachers tell us that the world exists, but existence is relative. It is true that every man has to live, take care of his body, and have some comforts in life. But it is important that these be not overemphasized. If the comforts of the world are considered as paramount, then

[6] *Dhammapada,* trans. Max Müller, VII: 94.
[7] *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita* II: 60-61.
[8] *Matt.* 5: 8.
[9] *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna* XXXV: 689.
[10] Albert Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and Its Development* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1936).

there will be desire for more and more comfort and pleasure. The result will be apprehension and anxiety. However, if worldly activities, comforts, enjoyments, and achievements are subordinated to the supreme goal of life or knowledge of the inner Self or God, then it is possible to live in the world free from anxiety. Those who work will become aware of the value of the enjoyments and achievements in life. The value lies in the spirit of service of God in man. The same inner Self or God that is in one man is also present in others. Swami Vivekananda tells us to apply the Vedantic principle of the oneness of existence in practical living and see God in all, in the husband, wife, children, colleagues, and co-workers. Then one can strike at the root of anxiety.

The conscious change of attitude toward life when carried out in daily activities gradually removes the cause of anxiety, no matter how it may be operating in the unconscious mind. Even though the change of attitude may be on an intellectual level for the time being, by degrees it penetrates the total mind through daily living and spiritual exercises, as we noted in the life of the elderly gentleman earlier in this chapter. The unconscious functioning of anxiety can be removed only when the contents of the unconscious are changed through the manifestation of constructive, harmonious, and dynamic new contents. No matter how dark and discouraging the unconscious contents may seem at the moment, they can be transformed by the new conscious and creative activity of the mind.[11] (This will be elaborated in Chapter XVI.) When the cause of anxiety is detected, a person should deliberately cultivate the opposite tendencies to counteract the anxiety, whether its cause is biological or emotional. The daily practice of meditation is essential in order to strengthen the conviction that man is basically divine.

[11] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology*, chap. VII, "Effect of Meditation."

CHAPTER III

Conquest of Fear

FEAR is one of the troublesome problems of mankind. It is based on the apprehension of danger of every type; and it has considerable influence in determining the personality of a man. Certain forms of fear are reactions from the primitive instincts —self-preservation, self-expression, sex, and so forth—and at a certain stage they can be used for constructive and evolutionary purposes. Basically, however, fear is a destructive, dissipating, and discomforting tendency.

Primitive man does not seem to feel that he can cope with the different causes of fear, so he tries to escape from it by means of propitiatory processes, such as approaching personified nature and other beings to save him from destruction. When a child is born and feels the diversity of experience, he cannot easily find himself in homogeneous and harmonious surroundings. He constantly struggles for existence. The moment his urge of self-preservation is threatened and the moment he feels the possibility of disturbance, he becomes afraid and seeks help. Some thinkers feel that fear is associated only with self-preservation. The illustrations given in the previous chapter on anxiety indicate that any of the primary urges which are not properly handled will produce fear.

When a person finds himself inadequate in coping with the problems of life, he develops what is generally known as an inferiority complex or fear complex. The sense of inadequacy can often be traced to infancy. If the parents do not give love and attention to the growing child, he develops a feeling of inferiority and has to struggle for life. The child who is brought

up in unhappy or disrupted families where the parents are not stabilized will be fearful. He will manifest unusual behavior patterns. He cannot behave normally in situations causing suspense and worry about the protection of his own life. Again, when the behavior of one or both parents is unpredictable, a child shows considerable inferiority and becomes timid in facing the world. He does not develop any certainty in his life, behavior, and expressions in a social situation. When he grows up, he wants to assert himself; but he cannot find his legitimate place in the struggle for existence because of his own defect, which was created either by wrong training in the family or by a hostile society.

Hostility is often felt and expressed in a competitive society where the members have to fight for their position and success, and their suspicion is aroused lest someone else defeat them. The wrong attitude of such a child creates abnormality in his behavior. When he faces society, he has a kind of predisposition of fear toward it because of the insecurity of earlier days. Either the child has not received proper love, care, or attention from the mother or there have been disturbances in the lives of the parents. Consequently he faces constant apprehension, and when the time comes for him to meet the greater world—society—he has a tendency to be afraid and nervous. He feels inferior in his struggle for assimiliation into society. Because of that sense of insecurity, he behaves in an anti-social manner. He does not find his place in the community. He cannot express himself properly. He cannot find a normal life with other human beings. With his predisposition toward inferiority, he antagonizes others, but he does not think that he is to be blamed. He feels that society is unkind and is denying him his rightful place.

As an illustration, consider the case of a person who was brought up in a family where the father's behavior was unpredictable. He was a normal child with a fairly well developed intellect. Because of his father's roughness and unpredictable conduct, conditions in the family were always uncertain. The father would often play with the child, and in the course of the play his own emotional instability would upset him. The games invariably ended in a state of serious tension. The little child could not be sure how the games and other recreational activities with

his father would culminate. When he became an adolescent and was faced with the association of teen-age children he could not behave in a normal manner. He remained shy, developing a feeling of inferiority, and he always sought the company of persons inferior to him in order to have the satisfaction of expressing his personality. As a result, he never developed into a mature person who could associate with people of mentalities equal or superior to his own. He gradually restricted his circle of friends so that he became almost an egocentric introvert. His social qualities remained undeveloped and neurotic tendencies made their appearance. To overcome some of his anti-social attitudes and consequent frustration he turned to drinking. The patience and endurance of the mother greatly encouraged the young person. Medical help also contributed to his improvement. Deep sympathy and love, shown in the attitude of the religious teacher, helped him immensely, too. Counseling was deliberately non-aggressive and non-directive, lest the young person imagine that he was being guided by anyone and thus become defensive. Religious help enabled this person to become fairly normal with the expectation of further change and improvement. If this type of religious therapy can be continued, he will be even more stabilized.

The instance of a certain young man indicates similar causation. Brought up in a disharmonious family where the parents had nothing in common, he withdrew from the normal activities of a child in social situations. He developed an inferiority complex due to the fears of early childhood which were brought on by the unsatisfactory parent-child relationship in an unhappy home. This sense of inferiority remained with him even when he became an adult and had a fairly good position in life, thus affecting his interpersonal relationships. He is gradually becoming sociable and is overcoming his inferiority complex through his association with a patient religious teacher. The teacher does not allow this young man to feel that he is being instructed in any way. He is rather influencing the young man through a process of non-interference coupled with affection.

Another young man was forced by his father to take up engineering which was the father's profession. He did not feel capable of following in the footsteps of his father who was a

successful engineer. This created a fear of failure which gave him an inferiority complex. When he later changed his type of work, his neurotic tendencies vanished and he became a normal and happy person. He could not have success in life until he adopted the kind of work that suited his inherent ability and nature and gave him satisfaction.

It is natural for the adolescent to revolt against the ideas and teachings of his parents and society in the majority of cultural patterns. He does not understand that he has to adapt himself to this new and larger environment. If he has a sense of inferiority, he will express himself in a manner which will antagonize others. He does not realize that his life will be stable and he can have normal outlets of expression if he can only understand his place in the greater scheme of life. Therefore, he is fearful. There is an amazingly high percentage of adolescents in the West, especially in America, who show the effect of fear or inferiority. When the fearful young person tries to establish himself in the world he becomes unpopular; and the more unpopular he is the more his sense of inferiority becomes a factor in his behavior pattern. He is in a vicious circle. When he antagonizes others with his aggression, they react in an antagonistic manner. Then he becomes more aggressive and they in turn become more aggressive. In this way the individual, as well as friends, relatives, and society become unhappy.

There are various types of fear. One is based on the desire for physical stability, perpetuation of life, or health. Physical fear arises from a sense of insecurity and inadequacy. It can be removed by meeting physical requirements and through proper vocational training. A person should understand that he is not inferior or superior because of his vocation or the profession he adopts. Every man has his own place in the scheme of society. It is a mistake to think that those who occupy some positions are superior beings. A well organized society enables the different members to perform their respective duties and work according to their inherent tendencies. A society which emphasizes the superiority of some functions will create a great number of persons with feelings of inferiority. It is the duty of teachers and religious leaders to convince the average man and woman that their ways of living are not inferior. Every citizen should

strengthen his own conviction in this respect in order to become a happy member of society. People may be different from one another; yet each can contribute his own quota to the well being of the community at large. Fear caused by physical and vocational differences can, in many instances, be removed successfully by the attitude that each is great in his own place.[1] There is no such thing as a superior race. The superiority we see in a given group exists because of the opportunities available for its cultivation.

A similar attitude should be taken by the people who have intellectual and emotional fear and a sense of inferiority, as human beings also differ from each other intellectually and emotionally. Parents, teachers, and religious leaders should never use disparaging, discouraging terms such as: "You can't do that," "You are slow," "You are awkward." Swami Vivekananda used to condemn the use of the expression "don't." It degrades a person and gives him a feeling of fear and inferiority. There are many cases of emotional fear which are based on physical strain and injury; in fact, repulsion in emotional expression is generally due to early physical pain. Emotional fear can be eliminated by sympathetic understanding, patience, and loving attention.

The third form of fear is spiritual. In Chapter II, the case of the little girl illustrated how the sense of sin can paralyze a person. Man has weaknesses and sinful tendencies, but it is a mistake to overemphasize these.

True understanding of religion does not create fear. On the contrary, it removes the basis for fear as we begin to understand that we are "children of God" and that "the Kingdom of God" is within us. Swami Vivekananda says:

> Strength is goodness, weakness is sin. . . . And the only religion that ought to be taught, is the religion of *fearlessness*. Either in this world or in the world of religion, it is true that fear is the sure cause of degradation and sin. . . . And what causes fear? Ignorance of our own nature. Each of us is heir-apparent to the Emperor of Emperors; we are of the substance of God Himself.[2]

The best method for overcoming fear is emphasis on the positive side of religion and conviction that we are inseparably connected with God as a mine of strength. In doing this, we not

[1] "Karma Yoga," *Works,* I.
[2] *Works,* III, 160.

only can refute the statements of the critics of religion but we also can stabilize our own and others' lives. In many cases we have seen that when persons begin to cultivate this spirit of religion their lives are changed; fear and neuroses vanish; behavior becomes normal; and gradually these persons become sources of strength and inspiration to others.

The three types of fear can be overcome by cultivating our higher spiritual consciousness. Swami Vivekananda tells us to live, preach, and teach the gospel of strength. First it must be lived before it can be taught. It is not a physical science which is demonstrated in the laboratory. It is purely subjective or mental, yet it has tangible results. The subjective or mental change can take place only when it is initiated by a man who has integrated himself. The man who lives the life of strength can alone demonstrate its value to others. But the inner source of strength cannot be measured or known from its physical results.

Let us clarify what we mean by strength. The majority of the people think that when they express physical force they are strong. To be sure, they are physically strong; but they make a great blunder when they want to establish their position in life through physical force. This mistaken idea has been perpetuated for centuries, and the result has been disastrous. We know from the study of history that people have been destroying themselves and each other because they have misconceived strength as physical force. Physical force will always create conflict because it is limiting. There is no possibility of unity on the physical plane.

The same is true of the intellectual and emotional planes of existence. There is a vast difference in the intellectual conceptions and emotional reactions of people. No two persons will react in the same way to the same experience. The presence of a particular man will inspire some people to give everything for the good of humanity while the appearance of that man will antagonize others. We know from historical accounts how the great spiritual personalities were loved by some and hated by others. It has happened in the lives of all outstanding spiritual personalities.

Unity is possible only on the spiritual plane. When a man realizes his true nature, his divine Self, his soul, then he finds

unity of existence. To illustrate this we can refer to some of the mystical experiences of Sri Ramakrishna. He realized the Oneness of existence in such a way that He could feel the presence of the Divine Being in every living thing. He felt on His own body the pressure of men's feet on blades of grass. He felt the beating given to a bullock and the marks appeared on His back. He felt the pain of these things because of His realization of the one divine Reality. Similar experiences have been known by other great personalities. Buddha identified Himself with the whole universe and that is the reason He offered His life to save one lamb. Jesus identified Himself with others, not just with the Jews. In his words and activities, St. Francis of Assisi indicated that he realized the oneness of existence. He used to address himself to Brother Wolf and Sister Moon. He keenly felt intimacy with the universe. When a man realizes that state of union with the spiritual plane of existence, he completely removes the cause of fear.

Fear is paralyzing our social system. It is destroying the stability of human minds today. In the struggle between labor and management, between the Anglo-Americans and Russians, it is a serious factor, acute and dangerous. The Russians are afraid of Anglo-Americans and the Anglo-Americans are afraid of the Russians. Labor is afraid of management and management is afraid of labor. The colored Americans are afraid of the white Americans and the white Americans are afraid of the colored. Jews are afraid of Christians and Christians are afraid of Jews. The Hindus are afraid of the Mohammedans and the Mohammedans are afraid of the Hindus. The British fear the rise of the Hindu civilization and the Hindus fear the British lest they again try to create a situation to perpetuate their domination in India. There is some justification for these international and inter-racial fears, but they are chiefly caused by ignorance of the real nature of man on the part of all. Americans are afraid of Russians because they are ignorant of the true nature of the Russians. Jews are ignorant of the true nature of the Christians, and so it goes. On this relative plane the differences will persist.

The realization of the divinity of man in the oneness of existence becomes the true solution of the problem of fear. Fear cannot be overcome on the physical plane. The body will deteri-

orate and die. No matter how much a person loves his body, it will eventually have to go. The body cannot be perpetuated indefinitely. So why cling to it and anything concerning it only to create more disturbance for ourselves and others? The great teachers of the world tell us that realization, understanding, or even a glimpse of the divine Oneness will banish all forms of fear. The conquest of fear can only be attained by applying the principle of unity in life. Mere intellectual conception of this principle will not solve the problem. There are many philosophers who will tell us that there is one existence. Yet they betray their ignorance of the true meaning of unity in their personal behavior. The behavior pattern must be changed with the awareness of that oneness. The moment that state of awareness is experienced, that very moment all the different forms of fear will vanish from consciousness.

While it is true that at first one must have intellectual understanding of oneness, in spite of the outward physical, mental, and spiritual differences, this alone does not solve the problem of fear. One has to work it out in interpersonal relationships and to bring out one's mental power through constant cultivation of this thought. As a man thinks, so he becomes. Practical experience leads to the conclusion that the cause of fear should be squarely faced and overcome. An example is seen in the young boy who was afraid of departed souls. When he was about fifteen years old, some of his friends found out about his apprehensions and advised him to visit a spot reputed to be frequented by such beings. He followed their advice and gradually overcame his fear of ghosts. In many cases of fear, individuals are encouraged to do the very things that create nervousness and other forms of mental disturbance. As they succeed in their attempts, they gradually gain confidence in themselves.

There was a young man who was constantly told by friends and relatives that he was good for nothing; he would not be able to achieve anything in life. For some reason, in the back of his mind he had a feeling that he would be able to accomplish something. His spiritual teacher always trusted and believed in him to the extent of telling him that he would attain the highest spiritual realization within a short time. These inspiring words actually brought out the best in the young man and he

has been doing many noble things in his life and in his interpersonal relationships.

In another instance, a young man was told by many of his friends that he had no manliness or courage. Even though he was intelligent, he was always discouraged by men of higher position. The result was disastrous. However, through the spiritual outlook on life and the inspiration of his spiritual teacher, as well as encouragement from some of his friends, he gradually developed self-confidence. As he practiced certain exercises like concentration and meditation he acquired new conviction. His fear vanished and he began to do creative and constructive work.

So, emphasis on spiritual strength, cultivation of conviction, facing the issues of life, and performance of spiritual practices can bring out the divine fire in man; and, thereby, he can overcome all forms of fear—mental, physical, and spiritual. Hence, the basic ideas of religion, instead of creating fear, develop the dynamic power of the mind and remove it.

CHAPTER IV

Conquest of Frustration

EVERYONE is trying to attain something, whether it is money, power, position, a home, or a family. But the vast majority do not have a definite plan or a real objective in life. They live a life of impulses. As the impulses arise they try to satisfy them. So they are not in a position to think about the methods for attaining an objective. They are drifting, so to speak, in the river of life. They go here and there as their impulses impel them. Consequently, they experience constant disappointment, conflict, and frustration. Toward the evening of life they realize that they did not gain what they wanted—happiness.

Everyone in this world is eager to be happy. Their activities indicate that this is their desire. Whether a person is black, white, yellow, or brown, whether he is cultured or uncultured, Hindu or Christian, short or tall, man or woman, he wants happiness. It is the basic urge of man. Those who are thoughtful try to find out the nature of happiness, the objective of life, and the method of attaining it. In primitive society man seeks to be happy by fulfilling physical requirements and by getting satisfaction through expressions of his physical nature. In a higher state of evolution man is not satisfied with physical existence. His intellect is developed and he tries to find satisfaction on the intellectual plane. He follows creative, intellectual, and aesthetic pursuits, even though he still has physical gratification. At this stage he realizes that physical requirements are not the whole of existence. When he reaches a still higher plane of development, he feels that he must satisfy his spiritual nature. He knows that this cannot be done until and unless his physical nature is sub-

ordinated to that ideal. On whatever plane an individual may be functioning he wants to have satisfaction and avoid the pain of frustration and disappointment. Whenever he thinks that he is likely to be disappointed he becomes apprehensive and fearful. Like fear, frustration creates a great deal of disturbance both in the mind and body of man. It also creates neurotic and psychotic behavior.

Frustration is associated with the failure of any of the primary urges. Man dislikes it in any form as it is a negation of happiness which he is seeking constantly in one of the three realms of existence—physical, mental, or spiritual.

There have been many cases of frustration even in children. A young woman reported to us that when she was a little girl, her mother poured out her affection to an older brother. The little girl was considerably neglected and she became frustrated. This colored her behavior pattern later on in her married life. Unfortunately, the marriage was disrupted because of the behavior of her husband and she manifested many neurotic symptoms.

There is the case of the scholar who was under the influence of his mother. When he became an adult he had an important job in an educational institution. He felt strongly that he wanted to express himself but his sense of duty at his mature age did not allow him to do what he really wished. When the second World War came along he became anxious to get away and join the Navy so that he would be independent of his mother and his childhood associations. His early frustration affected him in such a way that he lost his mental balance and finally had to be admitted to a mental hospital.

We also know of a young man who lived with a much older sister after the death of his parents. Several times he wanted to get married to girls with whom he fell in love, but each time that his sister knew about it she threatened to commit suicide if he left her. This went on for years. Finally, in order to avoid further frustration and dissatisfaction in life he took to drinking.

Various attempts have been made to overcome the causes of frustration. The hedonists believe in the greatest amount of pleasure on the sense plane for the attainment of happiness. They try to prove that sense pleasure is the primary objective because man is constantly seeking it. If you do not give the greatest

amount of pleasure to man, they say, he will be invariably in trouble. And if he cannot attain it himself he will be disappointed and frustrated and suffer from all kinds of functional ailments. Many of the Grecian thinkers came to the conclusion that the greatest amount of pleasure was man's objective. Intellectual pursuit, philosophy, science, and other intellectual disciplines, even religion, must be subordinated to pleasure. Poetry, literature, art, and painting were to be used for pleasure. After the fall of Constantinople and the post-Renaissance period, the civilization of the West tenaciously accepted the views of the hedonists of old Greece. Bacon, Hobbes, Mill, Bentham, and all such thinkers emphasized the greatest amount of pleasure as the primary objective of life. As they were deep thinkers, they seemed to realize that this pursuit of pleasure should not be limited to the individual; the greatest amount of pleasure should be given to the greatest number of people. But they forgot one thing; they did not take the whole of human nature into consideration.

Why should a man want to give the greatest amount of pleasure to the greatest number? When the elements of pleasure are analyzed, we find that the most satisfaction, however temporary it may be, is derived through the senses. It is the most intense and satisfying when concentrated on one's self. When it is diffused it is much less keenly satisfying. On the basis of these facts we do not see why a person should not increase his own pleasure at the cost of others, if the attainment of pleasure on the sense plane remains the primary objective of life. The Indian Charvakas and some Greeks were logical in their conclusions—eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die—because pleasure was their objective.

The majority of the people today, in the Eastern and Western hemispheres, are consciously or unconsciously trying to get the greatest amount of sense pleasure. If we analyze the time and energy that are given to the activities of life, we find that they are motivated by the search for pleasure. It does not matter whether a person is a scientist, philosopher, or literary man, he is impelled by this desire. Even religion is subordinated to pleasure. There are religious groups who promise health, bodily comfort, and so forth. Humanism tries to remove some of the evil that is

produced by greed, selfishness, and love of power, so that the greatest number of people can get the greatest amount of pleasure. Humanists have introduced many good things like social justice, social security, progressive legislation, and "liberalism" in politics, commerce, and trade. They have tried to make those social gains so that man can have pleasure and happiness on the sense plane for a longer time, even when he is incapable of earning. But is this solving the problem of frustration?

All these progressive laws, humanistic ideas of scientists and philosophers are bound to fail while there is still the desire for more and more pleasure. It is inevitable that as long as the greatest amount of pleasure is the goal of life, frustration or apprehension will remain in the mind.

While the mind has the desire for more and more, the body is not always fit to satisfy the desire; consequently, the mind is upset and frustrated. The body has its limitations; it wears out and becomes old. This is its nature. When a person gets beyond middle age the body begins to decline. At this stage frustration is likely to arise if a person wants to prolong satisfaction merely on the sensory plane. People often commit suicide because their lives are empty in later years. The mind also deteriorates to some extent unless a person is established in the higher principles of life. It becomes weaker as the body declines and the nerves become debilitated. The body and mind have a close connection in those who are not integrated on the basis of higher spiritual development. In those who are thus integrated, the mind supports and guides the body.

Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-Gita* that sense pleasure is achieved when there is harmonious contact between the senses and the object of the senses. Let us suppose that a man's objective is to occupy a great social position. When his senses are working in harmony so that he can reach that goal, then he has the greatest amount of pleasure in it. The same is true in family life when the intimate marital relationship is properly adjusted. If anyone wants to be an outstanding philosopher and his mind and senses permit him to work for it, then he attains the greatest amount of pleasure. If someone wishes to be a great scientist and works hard to reach his objective, he, too, gets the maximum of pleasure.

When several persons are trying to get the same material thing, the spirit of competition enters the picture. That is what happens in a society where pleasure is the goal. Individuals and groups not only compete with each other but nations also do the same. Wars are conflicts between the haves and have-nots. Some nations establish empires; others do not but wish to establish them. The old thieves, as Senator Borah said, fight with the new thieves.

Many psychotherapists believe in the sublimation and substitution of the primitive urges of sex and self-expression by directing the emotions into creative and intellectual fields. They have had considerable success in certain types of cases. However, even intellectual and aesthetic ideals can be swept away by the primitive urges if the latter are regarded as the sole aim of human life. So these remedies seem to be ameliorative rather than curative, while the goal of life remains hedonistic. A person does not find permanent satisfaction on the physical plane because of the changeable quality of the objects of enjoyment and the instruments of enjoyment.

In India a person is urged to cultivate the faculty of discrimination and analyze the nature of frustration and its causes. Some thinkers seem to feel that the more an individual cultivates the quality of discrimination and self-analysis, the more the mental state of frustration is resolved, as advocated by the psychoanalysts. Freud and many of his followers believe that in the very process of psychoanalysis the mind is stabilized. However, we have seen many cases where the people involved underwent psychoanalysis for long periods of time yet could not overcome the effect of frustration.

A professional man was analyzed by a prominent psychoanalyst in one of the larger cities of New England. He went to the analyst once a week for a number of years. Unfortuately, this man could not overcome his dissatisfaction in spite of analysis and an understanding of the cause of his problems. Religious counseling based on higher values of life and mental training as well as frequent association with a spiritual teacher immensely helped this man. Unfortunately, due to certain circumstances, this association had to be broken and the man suffered a set-back. As a result of observing this man and a number of other indi-

viduals we are convinced that a long period of encouragement and advice are important for a permanent change, along with individual spiritual exercises which will be discussed in Chapters XIV and XVI.

The human mind is peculiar. It will not give up anything unless it has something else to take its place. Suppose that a person likes and eats a great deal of candy. The doctor advises him against it because he has an acid condition which the candy aggravates. But the person often cannot give it up as long as the doctor does not prescribe anything to take its place. In the same way, if the mind is to give up sense pleasure as the whole of life, then something higher than that must be given to it for mental satisfaction. A vacuum does not give satisfaction. Discrimination or analysis are of no avail unless the mind can have some satisfaction. If the mind does not find satisfaction in one way, it will seek another. By this we do not mean what many Western psychiatrists consider as substitution on the same plane of existence. What we advocate is a thorough change in the outlook on life. Rules, regulations, laws, or advice will not change a person. Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-Gita* that a man works because of his inner urges or nature. Unless the inner nature is changed, true satisfaction will not be found.

The present outlook on life which created the sensate civilization of the West, as Professor Sorokin tells us, will not solve the problem. He writes:

> If a person has no strong convictions as to what is right and what is wrong, if he does not believe in any God or absolute moral values, if he no longer respects contractual obligations, and, finally, if his hunger for pleasures and sensory values is paramount, what can guide and control his conduct toward other men? Nothing but his desires and lusts. Under these conditions he loses all rational and moral control, even plain common sense. What can deter him from violating the rights, interests, and well-being of other men? Nothing but physical force. How far will he go in his insatiable quest for sensory happiness? He will go as far as brute force, opposed by that of others, permits.[1]

He also refers to the "hollowness of sensate culture, the hopelessness of further allegiance to sensate values, and the impossibil-

[1] Pitirim A. Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1944), p. 205.

ity of attempting to preserve an orderly way of life on so rotten a foundation."[2]

A high percentage of people in this country are suffering from mental ailments. The United States is the wealthiest country in the world with the highest standard of living. Why should there be frustration here? Because people are constantly seeking more and more pleasure, just as children can be heard to say: "More! More!"

As we read in the Upanishads, our ideal is to seek bliss not pleasure. There is a world of difference between bliss and pleasure. Pleasure is limited to the sense plane and bliss is above and beyond it. Bliss can be attained only when we become aware of our true nature. The attempts of humanists, psychiatrists, social scientists and other social philosophers are bound to fail if they cannot change man's ideal. So long as hedonism remains the ideal or primary objective of life, there will be frustration. The only way to overcome frustration is to remember that the true ideal of life is the realization and understanding of the higher self or God.

People can be persuaded to change their philosophy of life, not by dogmatic theology, but by a broadened interpretation of religion. One day we were talking to an intellectual. He said: "I am an ardent naturalist." We asked him: "Are you willing to accept that your individuality is a part of the whole?" He replied: "Oh, yes." That is what starts to solve the problem. The whole can be called anything that a person wishes. It need not necessarily be called God; it can be referred to as "force" or any such name. The point is that a person should for the time being conceive that he is a part of, or product of, that whole. From this beginning he can grow on the spiritual plane. If he is a devotee, he thinks that he is a child of God, as St. Paul says. When we critically try to understand the nature of the whole, we are compelled to come to the conclusion that the whole is permanent and abiding. Professor Schrödinger concludes:

> The only possible alternative is simply to keep to the immediate experience that consciousness is a singular of which the plural is unknown; that there *is* only one thing and that, what seems to be a plurality, is

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 323.

merely a series of different aspects of this one thing, produced by a deception (the Indian MAYA) . . .[3]

Buddha emphasizes understanding of the truth as the primary objective of life. Sri Krishna emphasizes knowledge of the *Atman* or soul, Reality or God. In the Upanishads we find that the primary objective is the search for bliss or joy which cannot be limited to the sense plane. "Having attained this joy, (man) becomes blessed."[4] When anyone proceeds in a search for bliss, he becomes satisfied. He attains a state of mind which dissolves frustration. When anyone takes an interest in spiritual practices, peace and satisfaction arise in his mind. Persons are satisfied when they go through spiritual discipline. When one intensifies spiritual practices, knowing the objective of life, one's mind not only becomes peaceful and quiet but it goes through a tremendous change, a transformation. When the mind becomes quiet the nerves become strong. The people seek help from outside sources but they do nothing about their difficulties themselves. They created their own difficulties. They can remove them.

A person should first change his outlook with spiritual understanding and then try to reach the goal by regulating his daily activities under the ideal. By this process he will become happy and peaceful. Often people argue that this will make them otherworldly, but that is not necessarily so. *Have the pleasures of life but do not make them the primary objective.* One should subordinate them to the abiding bliss which is in the spiritual plane. New revelations, new experiences, new joy, come to a man in this realization. Then he is full of bliss all the time. Nothing can stop that flow of bliss once it has been started. Age, physical conditions, political and economic conditions, do not disturb a person who is established in that bliss. He has a treasure that no thief can steal, no dictator can usurp, that he cannot help but give and give and give. There is always more, not less, to give when he does so. It is with him all of the time. There is no disappointment, frustration, unhappiness. He who has conquered frustration can give happiness to others.

[3] Erwin Schrödinger, *What is Life?* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947), p. 90.

[4] "Brahmananda Valli," *Taittirya Upanishad*, chap. VII.

CHAPTER V

Forgiveness or Aggression

ONE of the important factors in the study of human behavior is aggression. This mental state is generally associated with frustration, fear, and a sense of inferiority. In fact, many psychologists and psychiatrists have observed that aggression is not only closely related to these tendencies but it is generally preceded and succeeded by them. They often cause an extreme form of aggression in the human behavior pattern. The germ of aggression is already in man in the form of natural self-expression and self-assertion. One does not have to go to a psychiatrist to discover that it is present in all human beings, implicitly or explicitly. When we observe the behavior of a child in infancy, we can trace this biological urge in him.

There is no denying that aggression exists among others than children. It is even in plants and creepers which raise themselves up and break the ground. It exists in the animal kingdom. There is a struggle for life and expression in everyone. If a person follows this natural tendency, he becomes aggressive. In handling social problems, friends, relatives, associates, people become aggressive. It is natural. Now the question is: Are people to be aggressive in a way that is natural, or should they follow in the footsteps of Jesus or other great spiritual leaders? This is a serious issue. Although the Western world is supposed to be nurtured by the Christian ideal, are the majority of the people following the path which Jesus laid out for them individually and collectively?

In social problems or interpersonal relationships we find that few persons are really trying to follow in the footsteps of Jesus

or to live according to His saying: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." We do not know anyone who has no problems in life. Every single soul is different from every other soul in human society. Naturally, each person wants to express himself. Consequently, there is a clash and conflict even with those who are intimately related. Children think that parents want to dominate their lives. They say to themselves: "Why should we not live our own lives? Our parents lived the way they wanted to, and why should they impose their ideas on us?" But when the children grow older they try to impose their ideas on their parents. They think the parents should do as they wish them to do. It is peculiar how children almost unconsciously take revenge on their parents by controlling them, when the parents are past fifty. There are innumerable situations of this type. We know a family of moderate means. They have an only child who is now grown and working in industry. She invariably tries to manage everything in the life of her parents, with whom she lives. The aggressive spirit has become so strong that she treats her parents almost as if they were children and tries to impose her ideas on them even in their intimate life. Her aggressive spirit and frustration make this young woman extremely neurotic and she indulges in narcotics and alcohol to relieve her mental and nervous tension. Unfortunately, few people can observe objectively their own aggression because they are so mixed up in it themselves.

The relationship between husband and wife is delicate and noble. Yet we find that there is serious conflict between them. Many people, when they observe this, are afraid to enter matrimony because they are not sure how they will get along. Many young men and women have a friendly relationship with their beloved. They often prolong their courtship for years in the expectation, on the part of one or the other, of ultimate marriage. They do not have the actual ceremony of marriage because of the fear of incompatibility due to egocentric aggression. The result is invariably disaster. Sometimes one party and often both become the victims of neurosis and psychosis. This fear of an unsuccessful marriage is disturbing the social structure of this country and making many persons unhappy. In certain cases there are elements of economic insecurity and interference from

parents and others; but the majority of cases of this type are affected by egocentric aggression. It is a serious situation which only religion can effectively overcome.

When we consider aggression in social, economic, or racial problems, we find that it plays a great part in disturbing group minds. The last two wars were fought because of such conflicts of interest. The conflict still exists so there is no possibility of early peace, unless something miraculous happens, which is not likely in this world of relativity. We have every reason to believe that national or international activities will not be straightened out for some time. Some people are frightened by the situation in the United States and Europe. We were told by a French friend that passports are being withheld from the citizens of France. It seems that wealthy people and those of moderate means are trying to get out of France because they are afraid lest they lose everything through Communism. So the government has become particular about allowing the people to leave the country.

Everywhere there is instability and uncertainty. No one knows what may be awaiting him. There is a lack of understanding of human nature and of spiritual ideals everywhere. We cannot say that the Western world alone is responsible; all other parts of the world are involved. The wave of aggression has touched even the shores of India. A report from India indicates that the same spirit of aggression is present among the educated boys and girls, who feel that the religious ideal is keeping them under subjugation. The same idea is being expressed by young Chinese people. While many Western people cannot settle their own problems, they nevertheless tell the Asiatics that if they took up the ideal of non-aggression, they would attain the Kingdom of God. This is true not only of missionaries but also of political leaders like the Earl of Ronaldshay, Marquis of Zetland, who expressed his views in *The Heart of Aryavarta*.[1] He was a strong advocate of the religious method for India, while England took care of her political affairs. The motive was probably not so altruistic as it appeared.

When we consider the racial problems of the world, we cannot

[1] Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Heart of Aryavarta* (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1925).

help thinking that aggression produces more and more aggression. The aggressive spirit of the West has dominated the Asiatic countries and has caused discrimination against Asiatic people. Reports from Oriental countries indicate not only that they are tired of the aggressive expressions of the West, but also that they themselves are developing strong repulsion and aggression of mind, if not always of action. A number of years ago, we noticed this in the pre-war Japanese, in their dealing with "white" races. Everywhere from Aden to Shanghai, Asiatic people could not leave the boat until the white people had had the opportunity to do so. Japan was the only country in which the Asiatics were not the victims of such discrimination. In the other Oriental countries there was discrimination against even the inhabitants, as in India during the days of imperial Britain's reign. Similar discrimination against Germans on the part of the occupying forces has been observed by many Americans.

The racial problems of the white and dark Americans and the so-called Aryans and Semites are also due in part to aggression on the part of one or the other of these groups. When any one of these races is persistently discriminated against, the group which is the victim generally develops a counter-aggression in the course of time. Unfortunately, the aggressive spirit of the victims is generally condemned by the original aggressors, who do not realize that they have caused the expression of anti-social, egocentric behavior patterns.

This is the situation. What can be done about it? On one side we see that this aggression is destroying the structure of human society in collective as well as individual life. If the higher ideal of life is not developed, the disturbance cannot be stopped. We find that aggression or self-assertion creates anxiety, worry, apprehension with the consequence that the mind is disintegrated and the body is affected.

A lady with a dental problem came to one of our lectures in a large city recently. She had been to a number of dentists and none of them found anything wrong. The toothache, however, was painful and would not stop. From her appearance and the manner in which she told us that the dentists could not do anything for her, the cause was evident. Her difficulty was mental not physical. The toothache was a functional ailment and the dentists

could not help her because the remedy suitable for this situation was integration of mind. Eventually, she went to a religious teacher for mental training. Under his guidance she went through spiritual exercises and gained mental poise. As a consequence, her functional troubles were arrested, and she continued with this method of training.

A few years ago, the Boston Dispensary conducted an experiment on three hundred cases of individuals suffering with functional disorders, such as toothache and headache. They did not give any medicine; an empty syringe was used; but many of the physical irritations and disturbances were stopped, some of them permanently, by this treatment. Others were ameliorated for the time being over a period of weeks and months, according to the mental condition of the individuals. Such methods, however, deal with symptoms and not with inner spiritual causes.

In order to handle the deeper elements of aggression in the human mind, we have to study it as it develops during infancy. When children are brought up in disharmonious and conflicting family life, they always remain insecure, as we stated in the previous chapter. They try to compensate for the sense of insecurity in the form of self-assertion. Then again, disturbed parents in their own insecurity try to dominate the children. They often carelessly or thoughtlessly use the expression "do not" for almost everything the children express. Any child brought up in such an environment is constantly frustrated and discouraged in its normal expression of creative activities and harmless play. He gradually develops a strong spirit of aggression. Over-pampered children also show aggression in their behavior pattern. There is a world of difference between leading a child to constructive and creative functioning and dictating to him to do or not to do something. Dictation or compulsion generally create repulsion and aggression in the victim. We have seen how children who are victims of parental disturbances develop an extreme form of aggression. It may be directed to one or both parents, to schoolmates, or playmates. These aggressive children gradually develop thoughtlessness, inconsiderateness, selfishness, and egocentricity. These patterns of behavior make them unpopular and anti-social. Gradually they try to compensate for their unpopularity by becoming more and more aggressive, which leads them ultimately

to neurosis or psychosis. Sometimes they also develop severe depression and dejection, which results in a serious psychosis.

It has been observed that parental jealousy impels one of the parents to cater to the child and give indulgence to its childhood impulses. The child instinctively realizes the conflict between the parents and the reason for the indulgences. He begins to develop symptoms of aggression and an egocentric personality. This tendency grows as the child enters adolescence. He becomes unpopular with his friends and he cannot adjust himself in the larger sphere of life—society. The parents often do not realize how much they are responsible for the disintegrating tendencies in their own children. They are offended by them and they grieve when the children develop neuroses or psychoses. We know of a father who indulged his two young daughters as a means of working against their mother. The older girl, about ten or twelve years of age, showed that she was considerably influenced by this when her parents were divorced. She gave testimony in court which permitted her to remain with her father. Later on, the young girl realized the injustice she had done to her mother. This thought and her subsequent behavior created a serious breakdown which led to hospitalization.

The aggression which we observe is really based on egocentricity and selfishness. Jesus gave us a living example in His words: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."[2] Buddha was a living example of His words: "For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time: hatred ceases by love, this is an old rule."[3] In the *Isha Upanishad* we read: "The wise man who perceives all beings as not distinct from his own Self at all, and his own Self as the Self of every being,—he does not, by virtue of that perception, hate anyone."[4] Jesus allowed Himself to be crucified; yet He prayed for those who did it. This was an example of forgiveness. Even though people may be destructive and harmful, we must forgive them.

A glorious incident took place in the life of Chaitanya many centuries ago. He is regarded as an incarnate spirit in India. When He was training His disciples in spirituality, two neigh-

[2] Luke 23: 34.
[3] *Dhammapada*, trans. Max Müller, I: 5.
[4] *Isha Upanishad*, verse 6.

bors—Jagai and Madhai—became extremely incensed. It was as if they could not stand the spiritual atmosphere of this holy man and His disciples. They were drunkards and addicted to all sorts of vices. One day, it so happened that Chaitanya and His intimate followers went out of their place singing hymns spiritually to inspire the people of that vicinity. Jagai and Madhai became infuriated and ran after them throwing stones and abusing them to the extent that Chaitanya and His disciples were injured. Chaitanya was in an exalted mood at the time and in spite of the bleeding of his wounds He went forward to embrace these two men saying: "Bravo! Bravo! Well done, but take the name of God." As He embraced them and forgave their misdeeds with intense divine love, a peculiar change took place in the mentality of Jagai and Madhai. Like St. Paul, they went through a sudden transformation or what the Christians call conversion. The forgiveness and divine love had an immediate effect.

It is difficult for weaklings to practice forgiveness. Swami Vivekananda pointed out that any weakling can lose his temper; no strength is needed for that. It requires strength to control one's self. It requires tremendous power to control one's emotions or natural propensities, what they call "normal self-expression." Natural or "normal" self-expression means that when one man criticizes another, the second flares up. The moment someone slaps a person, the victim naturally tries to slap in return. You do not have to go to human beings to see such a reaction. Dogs and cats fight like that. The moment they are alarmed, they jump. When a rat is frightened, he leaps at the person who frightened him. Human beings should express nobler qualities. Maturity in emotional life means self-control and consequent removal of conflict. In fact, to our way of thinking, a mature person is he who can use his ideal in his interpersonal relationships, however provocative the circumstances may be.

When we have seen what has been happening in this world, even from a pragmatic point of view, we should learn that a slap for a slap does not solve the problems of life or of the world. What we recognize as maturity of the emotional structure in the individual is also true in collective life. The group follows a pattern of emotional reaction expressed by its leaders. As it is stated in the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "Whatsoever the superior person does,

that is followed by others. What he demonstrates by action, that, people follow."[5] If a strong individual or a number of individuals are immature in their emotional life their followers will express destructive emotional qualities. On the other hand, if the leaders integrate their emotions and express spiritual qualities their followers will be affected accordingly. The group expresses emotions and forms of behavior pattern according to the ideal it chooses and the ideal that is the motivating power of the leaders. What we have discussed here regarding individual emotional maturity is also applicable to the group. Europe has shown us with more than five hundred wars since the advent of Jesus that the problem of war has not been conquered. According to Professor Howard Mumford Jones, Professor Pitirim Sorokin estimates that about twenty-four million war casualties have taken place during the last fifty years. In his *Education and World Tragedy,* Professor Jones goes on to say:

> From the eleventh to the twentieth centuries war casualties totaled about 18 million. In the first three decades of the present century we have therefore killed 33⅓ per cent more human beings than were killed in the previous 800 years. But these figures do not include five other continents, and they take us only to the rise of Hitler. There were, it is thought, ten million dead in World War I. Influenza, typhus, starvation, and other destroying agencies killed some ten million more. But these figures are principally for Europe; the best guess for the whole world is that 40 million died, directly or indirectly in World War I.[6]

We have seen in individual personal relationships that aggressive expressions in the form of selfishness have not solved anything. On the contrary, the problems have been intensified to the point of making people miserable. Even from the pragmatic point of view alone it is wrong.

Many persons have their doubts about the religious ideal of forgiveness. They feel that others will take advantage of them if they practice this ideal. Right now in Europe, Russia is taking its advantages. If the United Nations yields, the Americans will say that Russia is taking more than she deserves and she is trying our patience, so we should be firm. We are told by some that Russia should have been finished off long ago and, at least, she

[5] *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita* III: 21.
[6] Howard Mumford Jones, *Education and World Tragedy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), p. 7.

should be conquered now. Suppose that we take it for granted that she should have been finished off. Does anyone suppose that this would have solved the problem? To be sure, Russia might have been destroyed. But Germany was destroyed and the problem still remains. Suppose that this country alone remained a powerful nation; or suppose that Russia should become powerful and destroy the Anglo-American alliance. What would happen? We can see clearly that internal troubles would arise in such a way that victory would destroy the victors. The question may well be asked: How do you know? History gives the evidence and the answer.

In India, about 1500 B.C., there was just such a situation. One group (Pandavas and Yadavas) destroyed another group (Kauravas) and established supremacy all over India. In time, these victors were destroyed by their own internal quarrels. There is a saying: give a man enough rope and he will hang himself. Give rope enough to the Anglo-American alliance or to Russian communism and they will destroy themselves. It has happened before and it will happen again. Hitler became powerful and tried to conquer the world. Instead, his country was destroyed and he has disappeared from the world. In Greek and Roman eras dictatorships arose and vanished. There is an inherent defect in the thing itself which ultimately destroys it.

Historical evidence also proves that nobility, forgiveness, or soul force ultimately wins. Take, for instance, the Indian situation. Few people in Europe and America understand what India went through for two centuries, ethically, spiritually, economically, politically. In every way Indians were demoralized. Slavery has serious consequences. Does anyone think that a foreign government could keep India under such subjugation if the people there had not helped and become tools in the hands of foreigners? Certainly not. One young man who came here from India was telling us recently that during the last war father could not trust son and brother could not trust brother. They did not know who was in the employ of the British, who spent an enormous amount of money for bribery. For the sake of this money, one testified against another in court and gave all sorts of information. An American lady who has just returned from Germany

said that Germany is being demoralized in the same way. It was already thus demoralized under Hitler.

About 1897 or 1898, a number of Indian thinkers went to Swami Vivekananda, the father of Indian nationalism, to ask him: "Swamiji, how can we remove this slavery?" He told them that India would be free in spite of the slavery and its various demoralizing effects on the ruler and the ruled. He said that independence would come with no fighting against the British. Conspiracy of circumstances has made India independent. An example has been given to the world that collective problems can be solved by the method of forgiveness. Mahatma Gandhi's national movement and the work of his colleagues indicate definitely that the larger problems of society can be handled by the non-aggressive, non-violent method. The power of soul force and non-cooperation with the aggressor and enemy can ultimately solve these problems with the spirit of forgiveness. The same is true of individual problems.

The only way that we can solve the problem of aggression once and for all is in the way that Jesus advocated: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[7] Again, it was said by Buddha: "If one man conquer in battle a thousand times thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors."[8] As we have already said, this requires strength; it also requires spiritual development. People must spiritualize themselves in order to cultivate this spirit of forgiveness. What does "spiritualize" mean? It means conquest of the lower nature and manifestation of the higher nature. It does not matter whether people aré Jews, Christians, Hindus, Mohammedans, Buddhists, or any other religionist. Nor does it make any difference what nationality they may be. The solution is the same for all. One cannot reach that state of spiritual consciousness overnight where one is ready to forgive his enemies and destroyers. It requires time.

Recently, some Hindus in New York asked us: "What should we do now (in India)? Should we not take up the method that some are using and beat up the Mohammedans who are doing such barbarous things?" We told them, no, they would not solve

[7] Luke 23: 34.
[8] *Dhammapada*, trans. Max Müller, VIII: 103.

the problem by that method. Temporarily the Mohammedans might be subdued or even destroyed. But any violent acts would vitiate the nature of the doers; it would bring out the worst in them. They do not know where they would end afterwards. Hitler is an example of what happens to the aggressor. He first began to hate the people who opposed him, then the Jews, next the individual countries, and finally the world. No one knows where it will stop. At first someone may hate one individual, then two individuals, and so on. Gradually, this is intensified; it consumes the person. It is vicious. Suppose the Hindus adopt the method of destruction used by the Western world, what will be the result? India will be just one more European nation, and that would mean the destruction of Indian society. Swami Vivekananda repeatedly warned India not to follow the Western method or she would lose her ideal.

Now is the time to intensify our spiritual life. Now is the time to manifest love and sympathy even for the persons who are destructive. We admit that they are wrong, but the only way to conquer the evil doer is by dynamic spiritual force. In the manifestation of soul force a person does not use the aggressive, destructive method in handling personal and social problems. He expresses sympathy, love, and forgiveness to those who are aggressive and destructive. In the long run he will find that he will conquer them with his love. In our own experience, we have found that the wrongdoer is completely overcome by patience, endurance, and forgiveness. As St. Thomas à Kempis says: "Endeavor to be patient in supporting the defects and infirmities of others . . ." ". . . we must support one another, comfort one another . . ."[9]

If, in performing a little kindness, we expect something in return the next moment, we shall be disappointed. Even if a man is noble, he has to give the other person time to change his thought patterns, habits, and tendencies. When he has had sufficient time to understand the effect of noble qualities, he cannot help changing. After all, human beings are potentially divine; however hateful they may appear to be now, sometime or other the divinity will manifest itself. It may be under cover for the

[9] Thomas à Kempis, *The Following of Christ* (New York: Catholic Publishing Co.) chap. XVI: 2 and 5.

time being, but if a person is patient, he will find that the nobility of others will shine forth. When anyone sincerely and honestly expresses spiritual qualities, even the lower animals will be influenced.

Swami Vivekananda tells a story about a holy man in India. This man, Pavhari Baba, actually transformed a thief by love and forgiveness. The thief went to his cave and made a bundle of the few cooking utensils in which the holy man prepared food for the poor. Just as the thief was leaving the cave, Pavhari Baba returned. The man dropped the bundle and began to run away. Pavhari Baba took the bundle on his shoulder and ran after him. "Here," he called, "take this bundle; it belongs to you! Your need must be greater than mine, otherwise you would not have come." He caught up with the thief who burst into tears and begged: "Forgive me, forgive me, save me!" This incident marked the beginning of a change in the thief. He gave up his bad habits, renounced the world, and became a saintly man. It is true that the practice of forgiveness is not easy under vexing circumstances nor when it is unsought. Nevertheless, a spiritual man must cultivate it.

A question may arise as to how a group can express forgiveness and not become aggressive under provocative circumstances, such as those we have discussed. The necessary conclusion to be drawn from our previous statements is that just as an individual practices non-violence and manifests "soul-force," so a group should also cultivate that spirit in order to reach the highest goal of life, individually and collectively. Historical evidences suggest that those who take up the aggressive, destructive method are invariably destroyed by those methods. The only technique for the group is to develop dynamic spiritual individuals who can follow the higher spiritual ideal of forgiveness and love in their interpersonal relationships. Their influence will permeate the behavior of the whole group, which will then express the same ideal of the conquest of evil by love.

The conquest of aggression and cultivation of forgiveness in interpersonal relationships not only often changes the other person but also creates a peaceful state of mind. Conflicting and agitating tendencies which generally create ultimate frustration

and dissatisfaction are also removed. If anyone wants to do even a little good to the world, he must be thoroughly established in higher spiritual qualities through the conquest of natural tendencies and manifestation of the divine qualites of patience, love, and forgiveness.

CHAPTER VI

Competition or Cooperation

SOCIETY cannot function unless man knows how to behave himself in the company of others. He associates with his fellow beings for biological or psychological reasons, being impelled by the urge of sex and reproduction and preservation of the species, or the desire for love and affection. In his associations, should he cultivate the spirit of competition or the spirit of cooperation? There are conflicting theories among rationalistic thinkers. Some think that the spirit of competition based on selfishness is the basis of progress. Others feel that unless a person has this spirit, he cannot function in personal or in social life. Many people seem to think that modern industrial civilization would not have developed but for the spirit of competition. Of course, it is true that the present industrial civilization of the West is based on the selfish profit motive and it has built up an unique technological structure. But is this system healthy for the highest human progress, collective growth, and individual happiness? Evidences in the contemporary world reveal that in spite of industrial and technological progress the world is facing tremendous problems. In this competitive society, man is tense with anxiety and apprehension; he invariably faces frustration and dissatisfaction. Statistical reports show that these psychological evils are frightening socially minded leaders. Professor Pitirim A. Sorokin, in *The Crisis of Our Age* and *The Reconstruction of Humanity*, describes the disorganization of sensate society:

... the present crisis of our culture and society consists exactly in the disintegration of the dominant sensate system of modern Euro-American culture. Having been dominant for several centuries, the sensate form

has impressed itself on all the main compartments of Western culture and society and made them also predominantly sensate. As the sensate form disintegrates, so all these compartments of our society and culture likewise disintegrate. For this reason the crisis is not a maladjustment of this or that single compartment, but rather the disintegration of the overwhelmingly greater part of these sectors, integrated in and around the sensate form. . . . it is marked by an extraordinary explosion of wars, revolutions, anarchy, and bloodshed; by social, moral, economic, political, and intellectual chaos; by a resurgence of revolting cruelty and animality, and a temporary destruction of the great and small values of mankind; by misery and suffering on the part of millions—a convulsion far in excess of the chaos and disorganization of the ordinary crisis.[1]

Professor Sorokin also gives constructive ideas for the reorganization of society. He says:

Our remedy demands a complete change of the contemporary mentality, a fundamental transformation of our system of values, and the profoundest modification of our conduct toward other men, cultural values, and the world at large.[2]

Professor Elton Mayo, in *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization,* gives a frightening factual evaluation of the industrial civilization of this competitive society:

We have undertaken to transform an economy of scarcity into an economy of abundance, and the technicians are showing us the way. We are committed to the development of a high human adaptability that has not characterized any known human society in the past, and it is our present failure in this respect that finds reflection in the social chaos which is destroying civilized society.[3]

Later he adds:

Technical progress and technical organization have enabled the democracies—the "plutodemocracies" of Mussolini and Hitler—to develop, for the most part, beyond an ignorant and peasant type of living, to improve at least to some extent the general material standards of society. But we have failed to develop at an equal step the strategy of cooperation; we have allowed ourselves the easier path, the strategy of hate, that leads inevitably to the City of Destruction. Political leaders, group leaders of all types, have gained followers and momentary support by braying out fear and blame and hate to an extent that remains unrecognized in the popular literature of our time. . . . To blame a per-

[1] Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age*, pp. 21-22.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 321.

[3] Mayo, *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization*, pp. 13-14.

son or persons is far easier then to study carefully, and in full detail, a situation. Yet it is only the latter study that can avail to lead us out of the chaos of misery and malice that has overtaken our once proud civilization.[4]

As we have seen in previous chapters, the psychological evils created by the cultivation of the spirit of self-assertion and aggression or competition are almost threatening the life of the individual. So we are compelled to accept the prophetic interpretation of the people who hold that the spirit of competition is destructive and disorganizing. Instead of giving man happiness, competition is making him more and more dissatisfied and unhappy, in spite of industrial and technological development. So we cannot subscribe to the idea that competition is the basis of progress.

On the other hand, we find that all the great cultural movements of the world were started by people of extreme unselfishness. Everyone is acquainted with the life of Jesus, and there will be no two opinions that He was one of the most unselfish persons the world has even seen. The same is true of Buddha, Krishna, or Ramakrishna. The lesser spiritual personalities, saints of East and West, who contributed something worth while to the preservation of civilization were also unselfish.

There are many who question this estimate of unselfishness. They think that the teachings of Jesus, Buddha, and other such personalities are obsolete in this world today. They cannot be applied to this industrial civilization. This was not only the opinion of Colonel R. G. Ingersoll; it is also the opinion of many modern rationalistic, scientific thinkers, although many of them do not have the courage of Colonel Ingersoll to speak out; perhaps they wish to avoid antagonizing others. Like other rationalists of his century, Colonel Ingersoll set forth ethical ideals when he tried to destroy the convictions of the people regarding the existing churches of Christendom. He gave what he called the five gospels: "I respectfully invite your attention. They are Good Living, Cheerfulness, Intelligence, Justice and Liberty."[5] We do not agree with these people because the humanistic concep-

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

[5] *Complete Lectures of Col. R. G. Ingersoll* (Chicago: J. Regan & Co.), p. 405.

tions they propose for the integration and stabilization of our society came directly from the above-mentioned great spiritual personalities who were the most unselfish human beings. They sacrificed every bit of their energy for the good and happiness of man.

There is an interesting story near the end of one of the greatest epics of India, the *Mahabharata*. It is given in an allegorical sense and should not be taken literally. Yudisthira was proceeding to heaven and on the way he met a dog. When they reached the gate of heaven, the dog was not allowed to enter. Yudisthira said: "If this dog is not allowed in heaven, then I have no desire to go there." And he refused to enter. At that moment, the dog changed his form. It seemed that he was the embodiment of spirituality in the form of a dog, testing the integrity and unselfishness of Yudisthira to find out if he was genuinely sincere in what he claimed to believe. This man passed the test because he was a spiritual person, unselfish and integrated, who actually lived the ideal. In the *Bhagavad-Gita,* Sri Krishna says that a man of wisdom is thoroughly established in the unity of existence and he does not find any difference among all beings. To use Sri Krishna's own words: "The knowers of the Self look with an equal eye on a Brahmana endowed with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a pariah."[6]

We are convinced that real civilizations and real progress for mankind have been made by unselfish personalities. They showed the world how cooperative society could be established. In fact, their example proved that society based on cooperation and coordination could make people happy and peaceful. They furnished the raison d'être of cooperation and proved that psychological evils could be eliminated by going to the spiritual root of cooperation.

Most of the leaders of the political and social sciences have, no doubt, been trying to remove the evils of society, but they are only making things worse. Instead of removing the problems from human personality, they are creating more and more problems to the point that we are now in a state where the whole world is threatened by destruction, either by atomic and biological forces or by psychological tensions and conflicts.

[6] *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita* V: 8.

The majority of people in post-Renaissance Western civilization adopt the method of competition for their personal and public life. It may seem to superficial thinkers that competition and rivalry are inherent qualities of man. Ordinary people try to gain their points by removing the obstacles. Yet there are a few who fortunately do not believe in that method, who believe in the spirit of cooperation and actually practice the ideal in their everyday life.[7]

Let us analyze the psychological effect of the spirit of competition, based on the sense of right and privilege, on the individual and society. Little children live a physical existence and show the competitive spirit most of the time. They seem to feel that unless they grab things they cannot get anything out of the world. They become conscious of their rights and fight for them. The result is often ruinous. An eye specialist told us about an interesting case. A married couple among his patients had a baby when their little boy was three years old. Of course, the mother had to give considerable attention to the new baby which made the little boy jealous. When the father came home from work he, too, was naturally attentive to the baby. The little boy felt that he had to compete with his baby brother. At first he used to cry and do all sorts of things to get attention. Then he learned a new trick. He began to look at his mother or father with his eyes crossed. The trick was successful in attracting the attention of his parents, so he practiced it to the extent that it affected his eye muscles. He was taken to the eye specialist who found nothing defective in the visual system, but detected the cause of the trouble and advised the parents to make a great deal of the boy and give him some special attention. The parents followed this advice and the boy's habit vanished. If parents are not thoughtful when a new child appears in the family, the older child feels insecure and inferior in this competitive existence and often develops tendencies which some modern psychologists call complexes. If these tendencies are allowed to develop, they show up in neurotic behavior when the youngster becomes an adolescent.

Another young boy was brought up in the family of maternal relatives where there were other children. He felt that in order to get anything he had to compete with them. The result was

[7] Ashley Montagu, *On Being Human* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1950).

that he developed neurotic tendencies when he became an adolescent and these were carried over into his maturity. He could not stand the success or praise of any of his colleagues. The early spirit of competition became in later days a serious impediment to his social integration. He developed severe functional disorders, one of which was ulcers, and his life was thoroughly unhappy. So we see that the competitive spirit can affect even our physical well being. When people become adults and have to meet society on a larger scale, they do not always realize the extent of their own feelings of competition.

The existence of higher ethical or spiritual ideals creates a conflict in many. Spiritual ideals emphasize sacrifice for the good and happiness of others, according to religious scriptures and the teachings of the great spiritual leaders of the world. They say that when a person becomes unselfish he not only becomes happy but he brings happiness to others. Naturally, there is a conflict between these and lower ideals, or between what Freudians call superego and id. If the conflict is allowed to continue, functional ailments or mental ailments develop, and the whole personality becomes disintegrated. Nowadays, we frequently notice young and grown-up people manifesting these tendencies which destroy their lives. If the roots of these disturbances in adolescence or maturity are examined, they will reveal that conscious or unconscious ideals and emotions were not unified or integrated. The tendencies have been allowed to function independently and in a conflicting manner; consequently, the personality has never been integrated.

Scholarship alone will not integrate the personality. Intellectual or aesthetic development does not necessarily presuppose unification of the emotions. Karl Barth, one of the great thinkers of Europe, wrote a small book during the last war called *This Christian Cause*.[8] In this book he advocated the destruction of Germany. He considered the conflict as "our war," "the Christian war"; in other words, it was a Christian crusade against evil forces. The present trend of events is proving to us that it was not so "Christian" as he wanted his readers to believe. The venom in the book seems to us to be contradictory to the teachings of Jesus whom he is supposed to admire and worship. In-

[8] Karl Barth, *This Christian Cause* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1941).

tellectually he is a great admirer of Jesus but his destructive expressions are in distinct opposition to the words of that great Teacher. This in itself shows that intellectual conceptions do not always lead to integration of the emotions or the personality.

Let us consider the case of a religious leader who was greatly influenced by the spirit of competition in the field of his religious ministry. He was so much affected by this that he wanted to make a big show of his activities in competition with his colleagues and other persons in religious work. The spirit of ambition and rivalry so disturbed his peace of mind that he broke down and had to be hospitalized. We know a few cases of this type. Basically, religious work is not in harmony with the spirit of competition. It is really based on the motive of service and the spirit of cooperation. However, in spite of intellectual development, a person can remain emotionally disintegrated if his total personality is not changed by spiritual culture. There is a constant conflict in everyone, and it is removed only when the ideal is actualized in life. If the ideal remains separate and apart, there is no possibility of integrating it with the emotions or of removing mental tension, as we shall discuss in Chapter VII.

Everyone with whom a person has a contact—relatives, friends, acquaintances, business associates, and so forth—has his own tendencies. Each one has certain requirements of emotional life and is trying to express his emotions in the name of self-expression. Consequently, there is a very serious possibility of conflict. If two people are competing with each other, one of them is bound to be disappointed. Perhaps one got a position which the other wanted. Even so, he is not satisfied. He will still be anxious lest somebody threaten his new position. Such a spirit creates envy and jealousy, even in friendships. Husbands and wives are not satisfied with the attention they get from each other; they are afraid that someone else will take away that attention. This apprehension will remain in the minds of individuals as long as they want everything without thinking of giving something in return. People want social position and friends and admirers; but in order to have all of these, they will have to give something, or else there will be no friends and admirers and their purpose will be defeated. When there is competition for an objective—the greatest amount of pleasure or self-satisfaction—

there is not only frustration in the mind of one person but there is apprehension in all quarters. That is the reason Sri Ramakrishna says: "Oh my, what a storm there is in the mind!" And the storm will be there while the struggle for selfish pleasure remains.

The same spirit of competition is carried by individuals into modern industrial activity. Dr. Franz Alexander writes that our industrial system stimulates a desire for more and more production with more and more success.[9] There is a conflict between American and Russian methods of production. In this country there is the system of individual or private enterprise which functions under what is called the democratic method. There are disturbances between labor and management. Management cannot dictate to labor, which has organized unions for its protection and also for more and more comforts of life. Management must give higher wages, shorter working hours, and other privileges, otherwise there will be trouble. On the other hand, everything in Russia is regimented. The government dictates the terms and if they are not followed you either go to Siberia or you lose your head. There will be competition on an international level. If it is not with Russia, it will be with some other country—Germany, England, China, Japan, or even India.

When we think of the great problems of the world, we find that selfish, egocentric competition is leading us to destruction. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, the last two world wars were fought because of conflicts of interests, because of political and economic competition of various types. Two groups are lined up against each other. One group thinks that it understands what is good for the world; the other group has the same idea. Behind that is the desire for supremacy. Otherwise, nobility would have been shown in giving freedom to everyone, according to promises made by the leaders at the time that war was declared. But there is no spirit of sharing today, no spirit of those "four freedoms." So we are compelled to believe that there is a suspicious element in all the groups to a greater or lesser degree. If this spirit of competition is allowed to develop further, there will be an inevitable clash just as soon as they are sufficiently

[9] Franz Alexander, *Conflicts of Power in Modern Culture* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. 276.

powerful or confident of victory. We all know that the result will be destruction of the whole of civilization. No one country will be saved, whether Eastern or Western, as all are inevitably connected and implicated. So we can see that the spirit of competition does not solve individual problems, as we found in the psychological study of human behavior, complexes, and functional ailments; nor does it offer a solution for social, national, or international problems as we see in the world at large.

There is another method, and that is the spirit of cooperation. People will say that such an idea is utopian; it may be noble but it is not practical just now. How long can an individual or the masses practice cooperation? Our answer is that it can be practiced, provided we see the living example. It has been practiced before and it will be in the future. When the people become tired of the spirit of ruthless competition, when they learn the lessons from their bitter sufferings, they will seek something constructive and an harmonious method of living. We find in individual cases that people become weary of the worldly selfishness and seek religious ideals. In *The Individual and His Religion,* Professor Gordon W. Allport gives an interesting idea of what he calls "mature religion." In this a man seeks religion with higher understanding and higher values.[10] When we become mature, whether because of world-weariness, intelligence, or higher aspirations, we can practice the spirit of cooperation and service.

Let us go back to the individual life. If a person does not have harmonious tendencies, he will always be disturbed. This harmony can be established when the divergent tendencies are harnessed and controlled and when the person has a strong, high ideal in life. Take, for instance, the symphony orchestra. If the conductor is withdrawn the different players will lose the rhythm. They are likely to play the notes according to their own interpretation, and if this happens the whole symphony is ruined. On the other hand, when the conductor is present, the different members of the orchestra get their directions and inspiration from him and harmony is established, even though they have a different background and tradition. Under the leadership of the conductor they coordinate and cooperate with one another. Similarly, physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual urges can

[10] Allport, *The Individual and His Religion,* pp. 52-74.

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be harmonized when the supreme goal is the ideal of life. By supreme goal we mean the awareness of God or the higher Self in us. When a person has that as the goal and tries to use all his resources for its fulfillment, there is complete harmony.

Sri Ramakrishna used to sing a beautiful song describing the waves of the mind. The song likens the mind to a lake in which there are innumerable waves, the many tendencies and urges. On the lake is a boat with six oarsmen, the senses, who are trying to go in different directions. If there is no guiding spirit, the boat will not reach its destination. When we observe the Harvard and Boston University boys practicing rowing on the Charles River, we notice that they are guided by a unifying force, a coxswain. If they did not have a coxswain to guide them they would not succeed even in their competition with other shells. Similarly, every person needs a guiding force in his life. Then if he regulates his activities under that ideal he can unify his own tendencies.

When he emerges from his intimate family circle to the family of the world, he must cultivate the idea that the interest of the different members of society is identical. They are veritable manifestations of that divine Being or God. They are all seeking the same happiness or peace. If a person realizes the fact that the happiness of relatives, friends, acquaintances, or busines associates depends entirely on cooperation with one another, then alone can individual likes and dislikes be submerged. In this competitive world everyone is tempted to struggle for himself and the result is bound to be destructive and disastrous. If he thinks he has the right to self-expression and can make demands so that others will submit, even noble persons will get tired of such selfishness. Because of their nobility they may not say anything but they will be disgusted. So if anyone wants happiness and success in the highest sense, he must first learn how to cooperate with different members of his family. Then he must carry this into the greater world, society.

In the United States many people think democracy is the noblest ideal for political or economic organization. This democracy depends on the spirit of cooperation, yet there are many who feel that the spirit of competition should be advocated for the development of private enterprise. Competition might have

been to some extent successful and useful in the earlier days of growth in this country. But now people are living such a complex life that this very spirit will be destructive if it is allowed to go too far. Fortunately, social forces are working to control the selfish attitude of one group or another. If this country wants to keep up its democratic system of political and economic organization the people must learn how to cooperate with one another. Industrial strikes cannot be solved unless both management and labor realize that strikes will not finally solve the problems. Only understanding of higher values will give the solution. History shows us that even persons who are leading members of labor organizations can become selfish and self-sufficient. They can also become dictators. It has happened in the past and can happen at any time. When power is concentrated in one individual it demoralizes him.

Internationally, nations must learn to cooperate with each other. No nation is strong enough or great enough or noble enough to dictate to another nation. In this universe of diversity there will always remain variety. Why do people want uniformity? They cannot have it. Many times imperialists have tried to establish political and economic uniformity with a selfish motive and failed. The different members of all the nations must realize that if they are to survive they must learn to cooperate and not to compete. This is possible if they realize that their interests are identical. The interest of communistic Russia and democratic America is the same—happiness of the people, peace of the world. Ultimately, we shall find that every one of these people of any country or any vocation wants peace and happiness.

People often argue that the different members of society should protect their own rights and at the same time consider the rights of others. The top ranking and well-meaning leaders are fully conscious of this point of view and they feel that it is essential for stabilizing society. However, Sri Krishna stresses individual duty rather than rights. "Devoted each to his own duty," He says, "man attains the highest perfection."[11] Swami Vivekananda in his "Practical Vedanta" and "Karma Yoga"[12] also emphasizes the spirit of duty. When individuals cultivate this spirit they try

[11] *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita* XVIII: 45.
[12] *Works,* I and II.

to do things for others as their duty and they find the true basis for cooperation. This sense of duty should be intensified by emphasis on worship. Knowing that the different individuals are the various manifestations or children of God, we should try to see the divine spark in the members of the family and society. The real basis for the sense of duty comes from this philosophy of life, and the understanding of the divinity of man. Consequently, people do things for one another in the spirit of service and worship rather than thinking of individual rights. The performance of action in the spirit of duty and service naturally enables the doer to protect the rights of others. This high motive strikes at the root of selfish competition.

It is painful to note that in modern social service work in America, the leading personalities of that branch of activity sometimes do not seem to realize that the spirit of duty and service should be emphasized not only in the relationship with the clients but also with the co-workers. It is amazing how they talk of individual rights and act as if they feel the clients are mere objects of charity. It would be worth while for them to understand that it was the religious ideal that really introduced social work to the Western countries through the teachings of Jesus, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,"[13] and the words of St. Paul, ". . . we are the children of God . . . and joint heirs with Christ."[14]

On the other hand, many social workers seem to treat their clients merely as "cases," remaining aloof from them. It is equally painful to note that persons receiving help are made to feel that they are inferior beings. Those who render assistance through the different organizations are likely to demoralize themselves by giving themselves credit for conducting charitable work for the clients. It would be worth their while to realize that this spirit intensifies egocentricity on the part of the social workers instead of making them humble integrated personalities. We deeply appreciate their service to society, but they do not seem to grow in their personal attitude toward life. On the contrary, they seem to be losing the spirit of service which will integrate their total personality. However, if they would carry out the

[13] Matt. 22: 39; Mark 12: 31; and Luke 10: 27.
[14] Rom. 8: 16-17.

Judaeo-Christian tradition, in fact the religious tradition, this very act of so-called charity would in itself make them more and more unselfish; it would help them not only in their work but also in their other activities and associations.

It is noticeable that the relationship between social workers and clients, leaders and subordinate colleagues, is considerably influenced by the competitive spirit. This is also true among the social agencies themselves, especially in competition for funds. It is to be expected that such tendencies will be manifested even in these organizations, when the main viewpoint of life in society is egocentric and competitive. Unless the whole structure and outlook of society is changed, the disintegration of personality will persist. That is the reason that the spirit of duty is emphasized here.

The spirit of devotion to duty—emphasized by Sri Krishna and Swami Vivekananda in the Indian tradition, and by Jesus, St. Francis, and others in the Christian tradition—should be inculcated into the group of social workers. This spirit, especially when manifested by social welfare and church workers, will be a living example for the community and will play a great part in establishing and stabilizing a really cooperative society in family, national, and international life.

The mistake that the ordinary man makes, no matter how important his position may be, is not to realize that his competitive method is robbing the people of what he really proposes to offer—peace and happiness. Unless he changes his outlook and philosophy of life, he cannot give peace and happiness. He must change from consciousness of right to consciousness of duty. As long as he inspires people with the spirit of competition and right, he will gradually destroy those whom he loves. Do we not know what has happened to the unfortunate people of Europe? The leaders who emphasized the abnormal idea of supremacy also meant well for their people, yet the wrong philosophy destroyed them. We feel that if the leading personalities will change their outlook on life and apply the higher philosophy, principle, or ideal in their own individual lives, they can, by the spirit of cooperation based on the sense of duty, save the world from destruction and degradation.

CHAPTER VII

How to Overcome Conflict and Tension

AMERICA is the last word in Western civilization. Yet, in this country there is serious mental tension; and with modern competition it is increasing. In a recent conversation with some Western scholars who were raised and educated in continental Europe and the British Isles, we learned that mental tension among the people of Europe, even since World War II, is much less than that which they observed in the United States. In spite of the problems and privations in Europe, according to them, the people there seem to stand up under their difficulties much better than most Americans. In this connection, it is worth while to note what Dr. Lothar B. Kalinowsky has to say in his paper, "Problem of War Neurosis in the Light of Experiments Made in America and Other Countries," which was delivered at the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in May, 1950.

Naturally, people are anxious about the problem of mental tension. Scholars in general, psychologists, and psychotherapists are disturbed over the situation. In fact, the theme of the 1948 Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion, dealt with this problem and its solution through the help of scholarship. Psychologists and psychiatrists in other recent conventions and conferences have been trying to determine the cause of tension and conflict and the remedy for it.

We first find tension in the individual. The individual mind is full of conflict, tension, and confusion and consequent struggle. Then again, tension is observed in our interpersonal and intersocial relationships. It extends throughout society where it exists

between two minds or among many minds. Naturally, if we want to remove it we want to understand what creates it. Unless we have a clear understanding of the cause of tension we cannot remove it.

According to Hindu psychologists, like Patanjali, there are five states of mind: (1) *kshipta* (extreme restless state when the mind has tension and many emotional conflicts and longings); (2) *mura* (inert stage in which the mind has lower conscious and unconscious passions, such as anger, lust, and so forth); (3) *vikshipta* (state in which the mind is partly concentrated at times); (4) *ekagra* (concentrated state); (5) *niruddha* (superconscious state). Swami Vivekananda explains them:

> The Chitta [mind] manifests itself in the following forms—scattering, darkening, gathering, one-pointed and concentrated. The scattering form is activity. Its tendency is to manifest in the form of pleasure or of pain. The "darkening" form is dullness which tends to injury. . . . The "gathering" form is when it struggles to centre itself. The "one-pointed" form is when it tries to concentrate and the "concentrated" form is what brings us to Samadhi.[1]

These states of mind are made up of various emotions—conscious and unconscious. The mind naturally has different tendencies. These may be called sentiments, urges, instincts, or emotions. Apart from the primitive urges, man also has reactions to the conditions of life and his environment. The restless and partly controlled mental states exist, according to Patanjali, because of the wavering and indecisiveness of the mind in relation to the different emotions and conflicting urges. Generally speaking, tension is created by the presence of various urges and the conflicts among them. Tension is also created by the presence in man of higher attitudes or religious ideals together with the primary urges.

But there are various theories in the West about the cause of mental tension. The most important theories have been offered by the virtual pioneer of psychotherapy in the West, Sigmund Freud. His predecessors, Charcot and Janet, worked seriously on the problem, but they did not develop as clear a philosophy as Freud as to the cause of tension. A number of his followers also offered various theories, particularly Adler and Jung.

[1] *Works*, I, 203.

According to Freud, it is a biological urge which creates a conflict in the mind. Although he formerly called it the sex urge, he later on changed it to the pleasure principle. This, he said, is the urge in man to get the greatest amount of pleasure in life. Then, as he was analyzing his cases further, he developed another theory that tension is caused by the conflict of the pleasure principle and death principle.[2] The mind naturally seeks the greatest amount of pleasure, and if this urge does not have expression and is not satisfied due to repression there is serious tension. In his writings he discusses the stages of life from childhood to old age, but he classifies all of them as the various phases of the sex or pleasure urge. Some of his followers have reached the same conclusion, although they use slightly different terminology.[3]

Orthodox Freudians say that there is another element in man, the superego, which creates a censorship in the mind and prevents the expression of his pleasure urge. Nevertheless, although the urge is repressed it remains in the id, the depth of the unconscious. As Freud understands the superego, (which is known to some of us as the conscience) it is created by various factors in human society, the most dominant one being religion. This becomes the censorship which causes the mental conflict. Man cannot satisfy his desire for pleasure because he is haunted by that intangible something in the background of his personality. His conscience pricks him and then conflict is established. Religious and ethical ideals, which are part of the superego, prevent him from doing as he wishes, because he is afraid of the disapprobation of the people around him. They have certain ideas and ideals and their presence seems to create a disturbance in his mind. So he represses his urge for pleasure. McDougall has something interesting to say about this:

> Conflict is always a conflict of incompatible motives, that is to say, motives that impel us to incompatible goals. In saying this, I use the word "motive" in the widest sense, to cover every form of impulsion, from the crudest, simplest impulse springing directly from some instinct and driving us on to thought, action, or word, without our becoming clearly conscious of the goal towards which we strive, to desires springing from

[2] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.
[3] Menninger, *Man Against Himself*. See also *Love Against Hate*.

well-organised, enduring sentiments, and to true volitions and resolve, i.e., desires approved and confirmed by self-conscious reflection.[4]

We admit that certain types of religion can create serious maladjustment and tension in the mind, as Dr. Terhune points out. He says:

We believe that religion may be at fault on three scores:

First, religious instruction quite properly starts in childhood. Children are taught a simple and sometimes too rigid concept of religion. When they grow up it seems to them that religion is unrealistic—just another Santa Claus legend; therefore, many reject all religious teachings. . . . But we could wish that, as people develop and are able to comprehend deeper truths, religion would keep in step with the individual's psychological and social growth. . . .

Second, many religious teachings are not compatible with the known facts of human psychology. They represent a repressive psychology rather than a directive one; and are for that reason rejected by the individual as not being practical or helpful to him.

Third, we psychiatrists believe that the Church makes a mistake in assuming the authoritarian approach, and we realize that concerning this there might be much argument. Suffice it to say the history of religion indicates that whenever the Church assumes authority and power which men are unwilling to give it, then such authority perishes. Indeed, we believe that once again Christ's teachings bear this out. He used not punishment, but forgiveness; he stressed the value of personality, love and understanding, and service to others.

I should like to suggest that the churches establish a fact-finding commission, to ascertain what people believe in and live by. . . . The people need religion, want it, but often the Church gives them little help in attaining it merely because people and Church are both ignorant of what is really needed.[5]

It is not merely Dr. Terhune who comes to this conclusion; many other thinkers revolt against an authoritarian concept of religion which is immature. The erroneous understanding of religion can create mental disturbances, as we shall see in later chapters. Freudians and other dynamic psychologists can find some justification for their criticisms of certain phases and interpretations of religion. However, if they would try to understand the proper values and ideals of religion, then they would not have real reason to condemn it in toto as a repressive element

[4] McDougall, *Outline of Abnormal Psychology*, p. 215.

[5] William B. Terhune, M.D., *Religion and Psychiatry*, Publication Number 6 (New Canaan: Silver Hill Foundation for the Treatment of the Psychoneuroses, 1948), pp. 15-17.

and a cause of mental tension. In this connection, it is worth while to mention the ideas of Dr. Carl G. Jung which he expressed in his *Modern Man in Search of a Soul.*[6] Along with Dr. Terhune, he feels that psychology and religion should work together.

Religion does not advocate repression. On the contrary, its precepts teach us how to control our animal nature and biological tendencies and transform them into higher qualities. Religion accepts man as more than a mere biological being. Some psychiatrists, in emphasizing the basic importance of biological urges, seem to reduce human beings to the status of animals. We admit that there are common biological tendencies in human beings and in animals; but man has the possibility of overcoming his animal nature by rising to the human plane and gradually to the divine plane of existence. Instead of creating tension, religion, rightly understood, dissolves it. On the other hand, the views of some psychiatrists can only accentuate animal qualities and thereby create more tension.

The mind has a tendency to repress anything that is painful, disagreeable, or unpleasant. The repressed tendencies do not leave the mind; according to Freudians they remain in the depth of the unconscious to create further conflicts and tension. These repressed tendencies, whether they are the sex complex of Freud or other primitive urges, remain sufficiently powerful to disturb the balance of the mind, robbing man of his equanimity and peace. The repressed tendencies come to the surface of the mind at times and make themselves known. They sometimes remain in the depths of the unconscious to create mental disturbances and functional troubles in the form of stomach ulcers, palpitation of the heart, or circulatory and glandular diseases.

Neurotic conditions are often created by these repressed conflicts, which cause mental tension. Neurotic behavior of various types can be traced to the repressed urges in the id, the depth of the unconscious. Hindu psychologists, such as Patanjali and Swami Vivekananda, say that *samskaras* (unconscious impressions), gathered in previous experiences and absorbed through the influence of others, are also determining factors of human

[6] Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul,* chap. X, "The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man."

behavior patterns. The unconscious tendencies are not, however, necessarily the dark chambers of the human mind. They need not necessarily be the repressed conditions of the pleasure principle or sex, or the conflict between the life and death wishes. As Patanjali explains them: "The root being there, the fruition comes (in the form of) species, life, and experience of pleasure and pain."[7] Swami Vivekananda says in his commentary on this aphorism:

> The roots, the causes, the Samskaras being there, they manifest and form the effects. The cause dying down becomes the effect; the effect getting subtler becomes the cause of the next effect. A tree bears a seed, which becomes the cause of another tree, and so on. All our works now are the effects of past Samskaras; again, these works becoming Samskaras will be the causes of future actions, and thus we go on.[8]

Hindu psychologists recognize that, although the present condition of mind is created by past thoughts and actions, the present changed mode of living and thinking effectively transforms the mind. Therefore, Hindu psychologists are by no means fatalistic or deterministic. They are dynamic, progressive, and self-determined.

Mental tension is difficult to overcome, even from the Freudian point of view, unless there is a solution for the conflict between the unconscious urge for pleasure and the imposition of restraint by the superego, or the religious and ethical ideals of society, although there is also conceived to be an ego which integrates and directs the drives in constructive and cooperative ways. In recent years, Freud and his followers have discovered that even if all impositions of censorship or the superego are removed mental tension still remains. They have concluded that this is due to the conflict between the pleasure principle and the death instinct. Man wants the greatest amount of pleasure in life and simultaneously in a mysterious way he wants to commit suicide. According to Freud:

> . . . They [the sexual instincts] are the actual life-instincts; the fact that they run counter to the trend of the other instincts which lead towards death indicates a contradiction between them and the rest, one which the theory of neuroses has recognized as full of significance.[9]

[7] *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* ch. II: 13.
[8] "Raja Yoga," *Works,* I, 245.
[9] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* p. 50.

He further says:

> . . . Our speculation then supposes that this Eros is at work from the beginnings of life, manifesting itself as the "life-instinct" in contradistinction to the "death-instinct" which developed through the animation of the inorganic. It endeavours to solve the riddle of life by the hypothesis of these two instincts striving with each other from the beginning.[10]

We wonder how many persons there are in the world who are anxious to destroy themselves, unless they are pathological. There may be occasions when a person has a destructive attitude because of the pressure of misfortune, unhappiness, or frustration. He may want to get out of this existence, but the moment he regains his mental balance, that very moment he feels ashamed of himself. He realizes that the idea of suicide or destruction is beneath his dignity or against the very principle of life. The post-mortem reports of many suicide cases indicate that after these people attempt to destroy themselves they often struggle to preserve their lives. This fact suggests that the will to suicide cannot be regarded as a powerful inherent biological urge. There are, no doubt, individuals, who sometimes experience conflict between the pleasure urge and the death wish, but it is the height of folly to say that this is a natural conflict in every man or being. Even a child is frightened the moment his security or safety is threatened, and he runs to the mother for protection. This in itself shows that the child does not want to commit suicide. In the animal kingdom we find that animals are extremely anxious to preserve themselves. Plants break open the ground to raise themselves and to exist. As we study plant life, animal life, and human life we are compelled to accept the fact that the suicide or death urge is not a normal constituent of life.

The Adlerian theory of conflict and tension is expressed in the following passage:

> I shall consequently speak of a general goal of man. A thoroughgoing study has taught us that we can best understand the manifold and diverse movements of the psyche as soon as our *most general presupposition,* that the psyche has as its objective the *goal of superiority,* is recognized. . . . Whether a person desires to be an artist, the first in his profession, or a tyrant in his home, to hold converse with God or humiliate other people; . . . at every part of his way he is guided and

[10] *Ibid.,* p. 79.

spurred on by his longing for superiority, the thought of his godlikeness, the belief in his special magical power.[11]

Again he says: ". . . every bodily or mental attitude indicates clearly its origin in a striving for power and carries within itself the ideal of a kind of perfection and infallibility."[12] Then he adds: "Every neurosis can be understood as an attempt to free oneself from a feeling of inferiority in order to gain a feeling of superiority."[13]

McDougall and a few others in the Western world have recognized the relative importance of the various urges. To quote McDougall:

. . . But this opposition of primary biological functions is not the only source of conflict in the individual, as the Freudian psychology would have us believe. Each of the instinctive tendencies of human nature seems to struggle for its own maximal development, and to be capable, under favouring circumstances, of becoming hypertrophied until it dominates the whole organism, becoming the main channel for all its vital energy. And it is only by perpetual rivalry and reciprocal checking that obtains between the several tendencies that each is kept in due subordination to the whole system. When any one tendency, whether because it is natively of too great strength or because it is too much stimulated and favoured by the circumstances of the individual, becomes so strong that it is not easily kept within due bounds, the process of reciprocal checking is exaggerated in intensity and becomes what we call inner conflict.[14]

Professor William Brown also takes a broad viewpoint of mental tendencies:

From moment to moment the mind is active and you can classify the activities under the headings of self-assertion, self-preservation, sex, curiosity, gregariousness, acquisitiveness, etc. Then you may ask: "How through reaction with an environment, do these various tendencies to activity fall into a system?" The individual in order to survive must react systematically to the changes of his external environment, and so there are different systems of tendencies that spring up. These are what we call the instincts, and although we must admit that the doctrine of the instincts is a form of faculty psychology, such criticism is not a destructive criticism. The doctrine is a part of our general system of

[11] Alfred Adler, *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology*, trans. P. Radin, PhD. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1932), p. 7.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[14] McDougall, *Outline of Abnormal Psychology*, p. 50.

knowledge, as an hypothesis indispensable at the moment, like the physical hypotheses of the atom and its subsidiary parts, the electrons and protons, which we infer although we do not directly observe them.[15]

These authorities and some of their contemporaries do not give first place either to sex or to self-expression. There are other equally important urges, such as self-preservation, the urge for knowledge, and the urge for companionship. Man wants company; he seeks love and expresses love; he is hungry for love. We do not have to go far to find that out. If we analyze our own minds, we find that the majority of us feel lonely if we do not have companionship. In his *Personality, A Psychological Interpretation,* Professor Allport takes a broad point of view, as did McDougall, and his view of functional autonomy is a great contribution in the study of dynamics of the human mind. Professor Allport writes:

To understand the dynamics of the normal mature personality a new and somewhat radical principle of growth must be introduced to supplement the more traditional genetic concepts thus far considered. For convenience of discussion this new principle may be christened the *functional autonomy of motives.*[16]

He further says: "The dynamic psychology proposed here regards adult motives as infinitely varied, and as self-sustaining, *contemporary* systems, growing out of antecedent systems, but functionally independent of them."[17] It is interesting to note that Dr. C. Charles Burlingame of Hartford, Connecticut, recently declared that psychiatrists must have a housecleaning regarding the idea of sex. Otherwise, they will fail to solve the problem of mental disturbances. He said:

In the meantime, in psychiatry more than in any other specialty, there is a demand for a housecleaning and a hardheaded differentiation between hypotheses and scientific facts.

On this basis, I decry certain present-day trends, not the least of which is the close identification between psychiatry and sex. . . . I disagree most heartily with those who would interpret sex as the whole of life and expand the definition accordingly.

A part, but only a part, of man is his creative urge, and in turn, only

[15] William Brown, *Science and Personality,* p. 69.

[16] Gordon W. Allport, *Personality, A Psychological Interpretation* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1937), p. 191.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

a part of his creative urge is his procreative urge. Expanding the definition of sex to a meaning distinctly different from that cannot possibly aid the exchange of knowledge between scientific disciplines, nor can it contribute to patient enlightenment.

In this connection, I also take exception to any dogmatic statement to the effect that sex, in accordance with its conventional definition, is always the strongest of all human emotions.[18]

Karen Horney states her views:

According to Freud, the basic conflict is universal and in principle cannot be resolved: all that can be done is to arrive at better compromises or at better control. According to my view, the basic neurotic conflict does not necessarily have to arise in the first place and is possible of resolution if it does arise—provided the sufferer is willing to undergo the considerable effort and hardship involved. This difference is not a matter of optimism or pessimism but inevitably results from the difference in our premises.[19]

Again she writes: "My contention is that the conflict born of incompatible attitudes constitutes the core of neurosis and therefore deserves to be called *basic*."[20] These words show that Dr. Horney does not agree with Freud and Adler and their followers that tension and conflict are created by a particular urge. We find that the various urges cannot be wholly separated from one another. The emotions and intellect often function simultaneously. Dr. O. Hobart Mowrer also has something significant to say:

. . . we are suggesting the need for a radically changed attitude, generally, toward social authority, and indeed toward the validity and vitality of the whole human enterprise. Freud often asserted that psychoanalysis had nothing to do with philosophy, that it was science, pure and simple. It now appears that Freudian psychoanalysis not only involved philosophy but, in some respects, very bad philosophy; and it was the failure to recognize where his science ended and his philosophy really began that led Freud and his followers to some of their most grievous and fundamental errors.[21]

[18] C. Charles Burlingame, "What the Physician can expect from Psychiatry." (Paper read at the 19th Scientific Assembly of the Medical Society of the District of Columbia, Washington, September 28, 1948).

[19] Karen Horney, *Our Inner Conflicts* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1945), p. 38.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[21] O. Hobart Mowrer, "The Problem of Anxiety—Some Conceptual Difficulties." (Mimeographed.)

It is our view that mental tension is created not merely because of the presence of a specific urge or of several urges or because of extreme desire for their satisfaction. Tension is also created by wrong understanding of life in general. It is true that frustration of any urges will cause tension. We have studied a number of individual situations and have found persons who can be diagnosed by the Freudian or Adlerian methods, while others are found to be disturbed because of improper functioning of the urge for knowledge, beauty, companionship, love, or self-preservation. If any of these urges becomes extremely strong and they lose their proper balance, neurotic and psychotic conditions can result.

A few years ago we knew a woman of about twenty-five years of age who had a strong impulse for sex expression. We do not believe that her tendencies were unusual. However, in her earlier life certain persons had impressed upon her that her appearance indicated saintly qualities. She was impressed so much that instead of having a normal outlet for her expressions she indulged in hidden satisfaction. This urge gradually became strong and she began to imagine that every person was sexually interested in her. Due to some unfortunate disappointments, her whole energy seemed to be directed to the gratification of that tendency. She gradually developed physchotic tendencies and was hospitalized. This woman could have been helped if it were not for the outside influence in the early part of her life which so impressed her that she did not have normal expression. She could neither live a normal life nor could she devote herself to intense spiritual practices, because of the erroneous understanding of her interpersonal relationships. We are sure that if this person could have had spiritual understanding of life early enough she would not have experienced this unfortunate condition; we are convinced that she can be helped even now if steady spiritual training can be given to her.

Another young man, a scholar, had a most unfortunate relationship with his parents because of the disturbance between his mother and father which resulted in a divorce and the remarriage of both. This young man developed an unusual desire for establishing himself and for being first in every effort he made in school, college, and the university. We observed that

his neurotic condition was manifested because of two strong desires, one to become great in academic life and the other to become a great intellectual in competition with his colleagues and superiors. He may have had the desire to excel both of his parents. As we have been watching this individual for some time, we have become convinced that he is changing his outlook on life and realizing that an unconquerable desire for intellectual status in competitive society is extremely harmful to healthy living. He is systematically practicing different forms of spiritual exercise to manifest his will power, so that he can carry out in his regular activities and scholastic career the ideal he has now chosen. He has been helped immensely by higher understanding of life. He is becoming normal through understanding the cause of his neurotic behavior and he is gradually overcoming both neurotic tendencies and functional troubles.

A young woman of thirty years of age had enjoyed a fairly happy married life until the depression of the early thirties. At that time her husband's financial security was threatened. Then her very successful father-in-law died. This woman was apprehensive lest her widowed mother-in-law should request help from the husband. The mother-in-law appeared in the picture which created serious tension in the young wife. She had a nervous breakdown and all the symptoms of serious mental disorder. She was stabilized by attaining a higher philosophy of life. She realized that the mother-in-law would not be a burden to her, even if worse came to worst. She was also convinced that the life of consecration can alone remove her egocentric, selfish attitude. It took several months for her to establish herself in this new way of thinking. In the meantime, she systematically went through spiritual exercises of concentration, meditation, and so forth, and gradually developed will power.

Time and again we have seen that people who have a strong urge for self-expression develop peculiar behavior patterns. They will almost always try to show off. Many persons have observed that children beyond two years of age begin to show the tendency towards self-expression. They do not like to be limited. The moment a child finds that his father is opposing him, if he is bright he will say "Daddy, go away!" The very presence of "Mommy" imposes a limitation. As children become older, the

urge for self-expression becomes stronger. We have known many adolescents who rebelled against the ideas and ideals to which their parents gave weight. According to Professor Allport's study, the majority of young students either give up their church affiliation or institutional religion, or criticize it because it was given to them by their parents and others in authority.[22] It isn't that they do not like those in ecclesiastical authority but that such persons are symbolic of the ideas and ideals, habits and ways, of their parents, against which they revolt. Amusingly enough, these same students often return to institutional religion when they are thirty or thirty-five years old, or even earlier.[23] At a certain stage of life, young people revolt against anything that is given to them by anyone. They want to have self-expression, and if they go back to the established institutions, it is not because the parents want them to do so but because they themselves so desire. They want to feel important; they are individuals and can do as they like.

Parents should try to understand the psychological requirements of their children, even though it is difficult for them to overcome their natural apprehension for the welfare of the children. If the children feel that they are always thwarted and frustrated by their parents' expressions of "do" and "don't," then they rebel against everything that the parents want them to do. We admit that parents are not trained psychologically, so they make mistakes and drive their children away from the things that they love or adore, because the parents are tactless and do not properly express their love. If they were tactful they would not have to go through agony of heart. The children would do what the parents wished, if the parents would make the children feel as if they chose everything for themselves. However, there is a strong urge for self-expression in human beings. If this urge does not get a certain amount of satisfaction it will create abnormalities in the mind.

Ambition has become one of the important elements of the human mind today. It is one of the great emotional urges which create tension. When a person has strong ambition for power,

[22] Young people of the free thinking groups, Jewish and Christian, are more likely to revolt against established religious institutions than those of the very orthodox groups.

[23] Gordon W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion.*

position, or intellectual achievement and he finds that somebody else is trying to occupy or already occupies a coveted position in his field, he becomes apprehensive. If a professor feels that he has to keep up his position in the university and finds that some other persons are competing with him, his ambition creates anxiety. Often young scholars become mentally sick and disturbed and develop many functional ailments, as well as neurotic and psychotic behavior, because of ambition. Ambition for scholarship and for the maintenance of intellectual position becomes a disease with them. Older scholars also develop anxiety neuroses because they want to go farther and farther, beat their competitors in the university, and write more and more books so that they will be appreciated. In other words, ambition for position, recognition, or appreciation becomes a source of tension.

We find also that intellectualism can create tension in some instances. Suppose that I have a strong urge to be a great scholar, but, unfortunately, I am not adequately endowed with native equipment. I may be fit to become a fine mechanic but because I saw that my father or grandfather was a scholar, I try to imitate him. I feel that I can and should become a scholar. We have seen such cases where people developed great tension. We know of a scholar's son who tried to imitate his father, but he felt that he would never attain individual recognition because his father was such a great scholar. This caused the son serious anxiety; he even suffered physical disability because he felt he would not be recognized in the field of scholarship. The moment he had the courage to give up his intellectual pursuits, he changed completely. He may never be an outstanding man but he will have a satisfactory and happy life. If he had imitated his father, his mind would have been haunted by the thought: "I will not have any recognition in this world. My father has attained far greater heights than I can ever reach."

When a person is overworked, either through a sense of responsibility, ambition, or any other motive, he shows considerable tension. This may be due to purely physical reasons, but even here psychological factors often enter in.

The question arises: How are people to remove their tension? If it is not removed they cannot have a satisfactory life. Everyone wants satisfaction. We want to be happy, but happiness is

not present in the mind which is not satisfied or relaxed. Psychiatrists and psychologists, particularly clinical psychologists, are trying to remove tension. Twenty-five per cent of the cases treated are cured by the methods of psychiatrists or clinical psychologists. Forty per cent are helped; the rest are not helped at all. The clinical psychologist who reported these facts to us told us also that the twenty-five per cent who are cured would perhaps have recovered anyway without psychiatric treatment. So from his point of view only about forty per cent of the cases are really helped by psychological treatment. It is an unfortunate situation. We are compelled to find out if there is any other solution. Dr. Robert W. White says in this connection:

> . . . at least 1 person out of 20 may be expected to become a patient in a mental hospital at some time during his life. The last is indeed so gloomy that it should not stand without a reminder that patients leave mental hospitals as well as enter them. Census figures for 1938 show that slightly more than half of the patients admitted were later discharged either fully recovered or at least in a considerably improved condition.[24]

Freudian, Adlerian, and other such psychologists can, no doubt, ameliorate suffering or mental tension; they can help to control tension; we do not deny it. According to the above report by the clinical psychologist, forty per cent of the people are helped. However, they remain greatly dependent on the analyst. Yet in order to have a satisfactory life and normal behavior, independence is necessary. Whether a person goes to a psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, or a religious teacher, he must be independent. Independence is one of the strongest urges in the human mind. If it is necessary to depend on psychiatrists or psychologists all our lives, then life is not worth living. So independence must be achieved.

At a recent meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in New York, statistics were given which showed that fifteen per cent of all university students in this country are suffering from mental disturbances. At this meeting it was advised that all institutions, universities, and colleges should have trained psy-

[24] White, *The Abnormal Personality,* p. 564. See also D. B. Klein, *Mental Hygiene* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1944), pp. 98-99. C. Landis and J. D. Page, *Modern Society and Mental Disease* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1938), p. 24.

chiatrists and clinical psychologists rather than untrained counselors to help the students. Dr. Dana L. Farnsworth, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, also had something interesting to say in the report he made to the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry regarding the use of psychiatry in higher educational institutions.[25] As a result of his experience with emotional disturbances among students and faculty members, he is of the strong opinion that a broader interpretation of modern psychotherapy is necessary to equip the future leaders of society in the universities with emotional stability and integration.

Intellectual comprehension of tension will not remove it. Some of those who are going to psychiatrists are aware of their own mental disturbances and the causes. They are convinced that their trouble stems from ambition, over-emphasis on self-preservation, or the inordinate desire for the greatest amount of pleasure or sex satisfaction. But can they solve the problems of their tension or remove it? We know of some persons who have been going to psychiatrists continually for twenty years without losing their tension and conflict.

A good scholar was teaching in a university. During the last war he met a number of people in the course of his work who were great personalities in their own professions in different fields. They went to the university for special courses and attended his classes. He became frightened because he felt that he could not cope with them intellectually. That sense of inferiority created tension in him and he sought help in psychoanalysis. It was the interpretation given to him by the psychiatrists that ruined this man. He became frightened when he was led to think that he was still clinging to childhood or boyhood habits and ways of life. He had to give up his successful teaching. His is an instructive case but at the same time discouraging, in the light of what was done to him, for it shows how wrong theories can generate conflict and tension.

His wife brought him to us when he had actually become incapable of doing anything worth while. We repeatedly explained to him that a man is potentially divine even though he may seem to be weak. He was encouraged to understand that he not only

[25] Dana L. Farnsworth, "The Role of Psychiatry in Colleges and Universities." (Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry.) [Report to be published.]

had the capacity to teach students of college level but also that he could be happy in his interpersonal relationships. He was helped to see that he had no justification to be afraid of anyone as he was inseparably connected with the Divine Being. He was also given practices of concentration and meditation to suit his intellectual requirements, and he was loyal in carrying them out. Fortunately, he used to visit with us at least twice a week and discuss his problems freely. He was free in relating his past emotional life and experiences, however disagreeable they might have appeared. In the course of two to three months he showed definite signs of improvement. With proper understanding of the ideal of life and certain mental training for the development of will power, he gradually re-integrated his personality and resumed his teaching work.[26]

The psychotherapist who is trying to help these people must, like the Indian *guru,* be a person of integration. If he himself is not emotionally integrated, he may not be fully capable of helping anyone who is suffering with tension. Even though he may know the technique, this in itself does not alone enable him to know the true source of tension and conflict. He may understand that a person has tension without knowing the cause. If someone goes to a Freudian or Adlerian or Jungian psychotherapist, all his difficulties will be interpreted by the Freudian, Adlerian, or Jungian theory. In his *Outline of Abnormal Psychology,* McDougall gives clear insight into the various interpretations of the same dream given by men like Freud, Jung, and others. It is indeed difficult for anyone to understand the inner motives of a person and the cause of dreams by interpretive methods unless he has insight into the nature of the mind. This cannot take place unless a therapist is an integrated person free from all prejudices and preconceived notions.[27] A person may be lonely and seeking companionship or he may be ambitious for power or position, but his tension will be attributed to the frustration of the urge for pleasure or self-expression if the psychotherapist views him through a narrow theory of conflict and tension.

[26] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology.* See chap. V, "Will and Personality," for details on mental training.

[27] McDougall, *Outline of Abnormal Psychology,* chaps. VII-IX.

As previously mentioned, some of the psychotherapists consider religion as the cause of tension. Our answer to them is that when religion is properly understood it cannot create tension. On the contrary, it dissolves and removes all tension from the mind. It is declared by mystics and demonstrated by them that religion strikes at the root of all tension when it is systematically practiced in everyday life. Proper emphasis is given to the objectives of life, and relative values are subordinated to the supreme objective—the manifestation of divinity already in man, as Swami Vivekananda has said. Other religious leaders speak of the same thing in different terminology—such as love of God, experience of God, union with God, or understanding the inner light—and with different ideological backgrounds. Religion teaches man that the pursuit of pleasure on the sense plane is of secondary value. The moment pleasure is made the primary objective of life, tension is created. The mind is stimulated by desire for more and more; and the spirit of competition, selfishness, egocentricity, and consequent disturbing mental and physical activities become evident.

There are some unwise religious teachers who erroneously emphasize the sense of sin and guilt and they are likely to create mental disturbances in some people. Dr. Fritz Kunkel makes an appropriate comment:

> Why has nobody thus far provided a real and practical system of Christian psychology? Probably the deepest reason for this is to be found in a general mistake on the part of Christendom itself: Namely, in its approach to the problem of sin. Vices, character difficulties, and nervous symptoms are said to be related to sin, and sin is only to be shunned, never to be discussed or investigated. Sin is bad, and the good man turns away in horror. This emotional attitude is one of the gross fallacies of theology, whether it takes itself out in indignation or pity. We psychologists know that this attitude betrays the deficiencies of the Christian workers themselves. The individual worker has not yet solved his own problems; therefore he cannot solve the problems of his clients.[28]

On the other hand, some of the writers on the psychology of religion, such as Edwin Diller Starbuck and William James, go so far as to conclude that the sense of guilt is a necessary qualification for religious conversion.

[28] Kunkel, *In Search of Maturity*, pp. 34-35.

Great founders of religion do not always emphasize the need for a sense of guilt and sin for religious development. They show us the positive side of religion. As Jesus tells His disciples: "Abide in me, and I in you. . . . I am the vine, ye are the branches."[29] It is true that Jesus mentions sin for the benefit of the common people; but at the same time He shows how the sinful state of mind can be overcome by repentance and redemption, through spiritual living, as described in the Sermon on the Mount. St. Paul expressed this idea when he said: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil by good."[30] Again, Sri Ramakrishna said to Vijoy, one of His followers:

> Will you tell me one thing? Why do you harp so much on sin? By repeating a hundred times, "I am a sinner," one verily becomes a sinner. One should have such faith as to be able to say, "What? I have taken the name of God; how can I be a sinner?"[31]

Swami Vivekananda also said:

> Do not talk of the wickedness of the world and all its sins. . . . The world is made weaker and weaker every day by such teachings. Men are taught from childhood that they are weak and sinners. Teach them that they are all glorious children of immortality, even those who are the weakest in manifestations. Let positive, strong, helpful thoughts enter into their brains from very childhood. Lay yourselves open to these thoughts, and not to weakening and paralysing ones.[32]

The words of St. Paul convey the same meaning:

> Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.[33]

The highest religion neither creates tension nor does it emphasize sinfulness. No doubt it gives a sense of inadequacy at times but it also gives in great measure inspiration, hope, and encouragement for the attainment of a harmonious life according to the supreme goal of life. The primary emphasis is not on sin, but on love of God.

[29] John 15: 4-5.
[30] Rom. 12: 21.
[31] *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* trans. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1942), p. 159.
[32] *Works,* II, 87.
[33] Phil. 4: 8.

Now let us consider how tension and conflict can be removed. Freudian psychoanalysis, as we mentioned in the previous chapter, is advocated by the vast majority of the psychotherapists in the West. Some of them accept the Adlerian method and the Jungian training process. Jung's influence is felt, in one way or another, by many of the American psychologists who believe that religion is not the cause of conflict and tension. Jung understands that tension is created by the double nature of man—masculine and feminine, extrovert and introvert—but he feels that harmonization and training of neurotic persons is essential for the removal of tension. Karen Horney seems to go still further in the right direction, from our point of view, when she emphasizes and gives encouragement that man is not in a hopeless position with his tension and conflict. Rogers' nondirective counseling and consequent insight also seem to be helpful. Some of the American psychiatrists follow Jung's and Horney's methods, while most of the religious counselors and social workers follow Rogers' method.[34]

All of these methods are helpful but we have to go even deeper in order to remove tension and conflict. Mere knowledge attended by any of these methods—heterognosis or autognosis—does not seem to solve the problem. We must have a sound philosophy of life. Unless we know what is our primary objective in life, we cannot remove tension. The true primary objective, as we constantly emphasize, is religious culture—the knowledge of God, the manifestation of the divinity that is implicit in man. We must shift our emphasis from achievement on this sense plane of existence to the realization of our true nature, Self or God. This life, this finite existence, cannot satisfy the infinite nature of man. Basically the infinite is within us. "Lo, I am with you always."[35] Consequently, there will be dissatisfaction with anything short of that divine presence. The wealthiest man is dissatisfied with his wealth. We have seen time and again that people of wealth, power, and position are disturbed because their inner nature is not satisfied. This will always be the case

[34]Alexander, *Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis*. See also Gregory Zilboorg, *A History of Medical Psychology* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1941), chap. 11. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, and *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. Horney, *Our Inner Conflicts*.

[35]Matt. 28: 20.

until and unless they experience something of the Reality or God.

This brings us to the question: Are religious people satisfied? We suggest that they are satisfied if they are really religious. When they have a little taste of that inner life, when they have a little glimpse of that Reality behind this phenomenal world, they become satisfied. They shift their emphasis from the search for sense gratification to higher spiritual achievement. It is interesting to note that even if a person does not have that glimpse of the supersensuous he can still attain a considerable degree of satisfaction by going through certain spiritual practices and disciplinary processes. Swami Brahmananda used to tell his disciples again and again that next to the realization of God is the joy of spiritual practices.

> . . . If you can continue this struggle for two or three years, you will find in you a joy unspeakable; your mind will be calm and docile. In the beginning meditation proves very difficult and dry. But if you persist, as in the taking of a medicine, you will find in it a perennial source of joy, pure and unalloyed.[86]

Pursue the religious ideal for some time intensely and you will find that there is satisfaction in your mind. Restlessness and tension will vanish gradually. Intensify your spiritual practices, closing your eyes to success or failure. You will find, as the great Swami tells us, that in two or three years your mind will become peaceful. With spiritual experiences there will be unlimited, unalloyed, and pure satisfaction and joy. Such spiritual joy does not depend on sense objects; it does not rely upon any individual; it is not conditioned by the possession of money, power, or position. These experiences change the mind and it becomes illumined. The conflicting urges become balanced and tension is automatically dissolved. Inordinate desires for any expression on the biological plane will gradually be harmonized with human tendencies. There will be a perfect balance in the mind.

[86] *Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda* (2nd ed.; Mylapore, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1933), p. 100.

CHAPTER VIII

Social Adjustment

MAN is a social being. His social relations are essential to his existence. Some of the biologists think that the "social instinct" is cultivated in man because of his inability to cope with nature single-handed; therefore, the biological instinct of self-preservation is the basis of his social instinct. We cannot help but disagree with the biologists in our study of the psychological aspects of human effort and activity. We do not deny that part of the social urge is connected with self-preservation, yet it is incorrect to say that this is entirely so. The urge to love is present in man. This urge, apart from its sexual implications, seeks an outlet in his various thought patterns and activities. Man does not seem to be happy until or unless he can express love and have it from others. He cannot satisfy the urge of love without being socially conscious.

Even animals give evidence of having social instincts beyond the point of self-preservation. When a dog is in danger, other dogs begin to bark and show considerable feeling toward him. Through observation and experiment it has been found that this is true of birds. Observers of ants and bees tell us that these insects show considerable cooperation and coordination beyond the point of individual security.

There are psychological reasons for the social tendencies in man. He wants to express his emotions of love and sympathy and he wishes the same from others. Men and women are miserable if they do not have the love and sympathy of others. They can bear all sorts of struggles, pain, and agony if they are assured of sympathetic consideration and a little expression of love from

those around them. The mental life of an individual does not develop and does not have satisfaction without the opportunity for the expression of love and sympathy.

During the Victorian age in England and then in America, it was not considered proper for a lady to express her emotions. It was even considered wrong to cry when there was a death in the family. This kind of restraint is disastrous. Psychologists have traced certain conditions in modern society to the lack of emotional outlet. When people do not have any outlet for their emotions their lives become empty, even though they may be busy with duties and responsibilities. The moment they have certain emotional outlets, they feel a sense of satisfaction; life seems to them worth living. In cases of extreme emotional dissatisfaction, people have committed suicide. A medical man reported an amazing situation to us. A wealthy man in one of the eastern cities was devoted to his mother, even though he was married and had his own friends. When his mother died, he felt so lonesome that he attempted to commit suicide. When this was discovered, his wife called in the doctor along with some prominent psychiatrists. They stayed with him the whole night, talking with him and trying to dissuade him from killing himself. They succeeded in quieting the man. However, he later made another attempt, and again they talked with him and seemed to succeed in their persuasion. The third time he completed the job. It may seem strange that a married man with friends would want to commit suicide; but the emotional attachment to his mother was so strong that her disappearance made his life empty. When the object of love is withdrawn, a person feels lost.

Such things are done by people because of their lack of adjustment due to the abnormal concentration of love on one human being. Human beings are thrown together and have to learn how to adjust themselves under changing conditions. Those who cannot do this are miserable. Adjustment in social life is important for a person's well being and satisfaction in life. Without it, success is impossible. A baby has to begin immediately to adapt himself to the new conditions of life. When he becomes aware of the existence of others, he begins to notice whether or not they are sympathetic. Babies and small children

are intuitive in knowing the mental conditions even of strangers. The child that cannot adjust himself to changing conditions becomes maladjusted and develops neurotic symptoms. Child psychologists tell us that symptoms of neurosis are sometimes observed at the age of five or six and sometimes earlier. Then at the age of maturity a child must go through a period of adjustment. He goes out to the school, the playground, and meets new people in different surroundings, people who have tendencies opposed to his own, many of whom are selfish. Again when he goes from school and college into the greater sphere of life, he has to adjust to a wider world. At this time in life there is a great deal of difficulty for those who were maladjusted during their childhood or adolescence.

A few years ago, a young lady came to see us, introduced by one of our students. She said that her husband was jealous by nature, so much so that he was not willing for her to have any children lest he be deprived of her love. The young woman was craving a child. This created a pathetic conflict between them which was unbearable for the woman. She was a nervous wreck. Although the husband was a successful business man and earned plenty of money, he had hypertension (high blood pressure). His heart was becoming affected. Medical and psychiatric authorities agreed that the only thing they could suggest to save his life was for him to undergo neuro-surgery by means of a spinal operation. If he had learned to adjust himself emotionally to married life, his life could have been readily saved with no operation and he would not have had such serious physical ailments. This is not a rare instance.

Many people are maladjusted when they reach middle age. They do not want to accept the change of life and they seem to think that they can have a good time without stopping. By "good time" is meant parties until two or three o'clock in the morning and other activities of young people. This pursuit of pleasure has been the objective of their lives and they do not want to give it up when they are older. They try to keep up the pace but the body and nerves will not permit it with the result that they are miserable and wreck themselves worrying over their lost youth.

People who do not know how to live happily in their maturity

and old age and accept the conditions of declining years are miserable. Many of them want to imitate the younger people, as Professor Carl Jung says:

> For the most part our old people try to compete with the young. In the United States it is almost an ideal for the father to be the brother of his sons, and for the mother if possible to be the younger sister of her daughter.[1]

We have deep sympathy for such persons. When they think that physical vigor is the supreme objective of life, we understand why they want to cling to youth. However, this desire brings with it maladjustment and abnormal behavior, not to speak of unhappiness and dissatisfaction. We have seen elderly and gracious people who were actually radiant at that time of life because they were well adjusted. We had a friend eighty-two years of age who was a business man. Often we would go to see him just to talk. He was friendly and would treat us like his own son. He lived a quiet life, and his face reflected his serene mental condition and satisfaction. On the other hand, his wife was far from peace. She wanted to go on and on with her activities. She was restless, unhappy, and disturbed, in spite of her economic security and family, including her grandchildren.

Many persons are intellectually maladjusted. They may be temperamentally of one type but they admire temperaments of another type and try to imitate them. The desire to become like another person is abnormal and creates dissatisfaction and frustration. We know of a person who is intellectually and emotionally maladjusted because he wants to be admired all the time. He wants to be praised as the only man of his group who accomplishes anything. This desire for praise and admiration is so abnormal that his social relationships are disagreeable. There is no possibility of his having any satisfactory social life unless he is assured of getting ahead of others in some way.

Today we face the problem of modern industrialization. We used to think that the Oriental countries were free from these problems. But now China and India are industrializing. If they are not careful, they will face the same situation as that of Europe and America. As industry expands, men and women are taken from their old ways of life and they find them-

[1] Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul,* p. 126.

selves in a new environment. They break away from the old moorings and familiar conditions. The new conditions create social and individual problems. Many modern sociologists and other social scientists have been studying this problem seriously in Europe and America.

Some advanced French thinkers studied the industrial situation toward the end of the last century. They said that the industrial civilization at that time was creating an "anemic" condition in society. In the human body anemia is serious, whether it is pernicious or secondary. The first is fatal and the second is weakening. There is no energy, strength, or vitality. The same thing is true in society. Social scientists in Harvard University and the University of Chicago have been studying this problem for the last twenty-five years. Elton Mayo's study and research in industrial problems have uncovered some amazing facts concerning the prevalence of suicide and juvenile delinquency in industrialized areas. No doubt, the last war has a bearing on these problems, but even so an appalling number of cases were known to exist prior to the war. The period which preceded the war can be considered as the "anemic" period. At that time the people lacked vitality and the power of adjustment, nor did they care to adjust. The inclination of families to move here and there is regarded by social scientists as dangerous. The family has no roots anywhere. There is no psychological stamina in the children. They do not have the capacity to adjust to changing conditions.

Life in the same community creates a sense of social consciousness of other members of the neighborhood and a feeling of responsibility for them at times of hardship and misfortune. The different families in a given area learn how to serve and help each other. They expand with loving thought and consideration for their neighbors and they have satisfaction in their social relationships and behavior. When they do not have such opportunities by being a part of community life, they cannot stand the difficulties of life. When families frequently move about, the children lose the stabilizing influence of social contacts and gradually become self-centered and selfish. They do not learn to adjust themselves in new areas of existence. In turn, their

behavior becomes neurotic and shows the social evils that are observed by the Harvard and Chicago social scientists.

A professor of the psychology of education at Harvard has been studying the Indian social system with reference to the social conditions in America. In India (as in China), we have what is called a joint family system. The sons take their wives into the home to live with the parents, so that parents, children, and children's children all live together. Unfortunately, in recent years the system has radically changed because of the struggle for existence under adverse economic conditions. Families have had to split up when some of the members went away to try and get a living elsewhere. However, they still cling to the old system to the extent of getting together at least for a month every year during the vacation time. The joint family has a tremendous influence. An individual has to adjust himself to his brothers, sisters, sisters-in-law, their children, and the other family members. He also learns to love and serve them and he receives love and service in return. In families we knew, where the father earned more than any of the other working members, he never gave his wife or children more than what the other working men of the household could give to his sisters-in-law and their children. Everyone received equally their ordinary living, clothes, ornaments, educational opportunities, and so on. When we have described the joint family system to some of the progressive social scientists in this country, they have all admired it but have said that it would not be workable in this competitive society of the West.

There are two sides of this system to consider. We do not say that it is all good. There is a danger of too much dependence on the members of the family who earn the most money, which can lead to loss of initiative. On the other hand, there is a great contribution made by joint family life; it enables the members to become adjusted personalities and to be less selfish and egocentric. Those who are maladjusted are not appreciated in society. The members of the family learn self-sacrifice, which is a blessing to themselves and others.

Modern society, industrial society, generally does not consider self-restraint. Although we admire the attempts being made by the groups at Harvard and Chicago, they have not touched the

root of industrial problems nor have they found the solution. For some reason or other they think and they say that Christianity has failed, and that we have to find some other ways of social adjustment. We agree with these groups about the social problems that exist but we differ widely in the means for their solution. The teachings of Christ have not failed; but men do not want to apply them in their everyday life. It is not the fault of Christianity. The sense of security in society cannot be introduced or established by mere social security measures of insurance, assistance, and other such benefits. Real security comes from the sense of adjustment based on higher spiritual values.

There will be changed conditions in both Eastern and Western society. The East will be thoroughly changed when industry is introduced as vigorously as it was introduced in Europe and America. Industrial centers will attract people from the villages. Then the people of the East will have to know how to adjust themselves. It would be a mistake to say that the industries should be decentralized and the people sent back home to the villages. It cannot be done either in the East or West. Swami Vivekananda foresaw what was coming. He said that this development would be seen in India, China, and all of the Eastern countries. He said it would be difficult to change the economic or mechanical trend; the people would not want it changed. His constructive idea was that the people must try to apply what he called "Practical Vedanta" in the economic as well as other departments of life. The great Swami meant that everyone must try to see the divinity in men and work for the good and happiness of all because of the common basis of existence.

We do not admit that religion has failed. What has failed is the proper understanding of religion. People have forgotten the religious values of life; so they blame everything on religion. Religion has not been applied to everyday life; it has been forced back from life; it has been kept in the churches, temples, and synagogues. Religion is not mere observance of ceremonies and rituals. It is a way of life, both inner and outer, both individual and social. If it does not change our outlook on life, then it is no religion. So we propose that in social adjustment the spiritual values of life must be introduced. Again, we say that by spiritual values we mean the understanding and realization

of God, the understanding of our soul, or, as Swami Vivekananda says, the manifestation of the divinity that is already in man, rather than sense pleasure or enjoyment or the accumulation of power. We are not bundles of material forces or mechanical machines, as modern naturalists or the old materialists tell us. We are basically spiritual beings. People need to be inspired with the idea that everyone is fundamentally spiritual—whether Hindu, Christian, Jew, or Mohammedan. When people remember this and try to regulate their lives accordingly, then alone do they have a solution to social problems.

People have their intellectual ideas, but if the emotions are not satisfied then the intellectual ideas are thrown aside. That is the case when the professors say that Christianity has failed. Religion has been divorced from life; the higher values have been separated from transitory or relative values. However, the relative values cannot be stabilizing elements. Children enjoy toys and dolls but mature people cannot do so. They have to change and move on to higher values. As individuals develop, they realize that the values they once used were all relative and temporary. The more they fortify themselves with the highest values of life—the understanding and knowledge of God and the application of this knowledge in life—the more they place relative values where they belong. The secret of adjustment lies in relegating relative values to their proper place and keeping the attention fixed on the supreme value of life. This requires self-restraint. The basis of social adjustment is self-restraint, not self-expression in the erroneous sense. Many people think that unrestrained self-expression is desirable. Some of our young friends take offense when we talk of self-restraint saying that it has a baneful effect, as some of the psychiatrists and psychologists think. Religious leaders all over the world will tell us that it is self-restraint that makes one happy and makes adjustment possible. Uncontrolled steam will never run a locomotive.

CHAPTER IX

Escape Through Alcoholism

MANY persons in modern society are disturbed about the extent of alcoholism. As a result of excessive and compulsive drinking, individuals are disorganized, families are disrupted, broader interpersonal relationships are upset. Medical men, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, religious leaders, social workers, and other interested people are perplexed by this problem, as it affects the whole of society in various ways. It is encouraging that serious thinkers are trying to find the cause of and remedy for alcoholism and, thereby, to discover a solution for personal problems and interpersonal relationships, with a restoration of life's highest values.

According to certain statistical reports, the total number of occasional, social, and heavy drinkers is calculated to be 64,000,000 in the United States. Of these, about 9,000,000 are alcoholics. However, Marty Mann estimates the number of alcoholics as 4,000,000, according to the statistics of the Section on Alcohol Studies, Laboratory of Applied Physiology, Yale University.[1] H. W. Haggard and E. M. Jellinek have revealed the magnitude of the problem by their various statistics in *Alcohol Explored.*[2] Along with social scientists, psychotherapists, and many religious leaders, we are deeply concerned about this problem in its human aspects. The situation is indeed frightening.

The very word *alcoholism* creates mixed feelings in different

[1] Marty Mann, *Primer on Alcoholism* (New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1950), p. vii.

[2] H. W. Haggard & E. M. Jellinek, *Alcohol Explored* (New York: Doubleday Doran & Co., Inc., 1942).

persons. Many religious leaders condemn it as a sinful act. In orthodox religious groups many laymen and clergymen create serious antipathy toward alcoholic addicts by their condemnation, in spite of the admonition of Jesus that sinners are to be loved and forgiven. Excessive drinking has indeed been the cause of destructive and painful experiences in modern society. But the condemnation of it has not solved the problem. On the contrary, unsympathetic handling of the situation by relatives, friends, religious leaders, social workers, and others has commonly driven the drinkers to further drinking. The old idea of sinfulness in the mind of an alcoholic or other disorganized person will never help in the solution of this problem, though moral responsibility is indicated. Many alcoholics are excluded from religious organizations because of this lack of understanding on the part of the leaders; with the unfortunate result that the alcoholic sufferers will develop hostility toward the religion itself. But if religion is worth anything it ought to be able to solve the problem, integrate the individuals, and stabilize their lives, by cultivating moral values and responsibility and developing will power—provided however, the person is willing to be helped or can be made willing by sympathetic understanding and handling by relatives, religious leaders, therapists, and social workers. Those who condemn drinking and adopt the attitude that it is sinful can hardly find the cause of "must" drinking or alcoholism, as they cannot approach the problem scientifically or rationally.

Why does a man become alcoholic? Is the cause psychogenic or physiogenic? There have been different answers to these questions. Dr. Thomas Trotter, in 1788, was perhaps the first man to declare that alcoholism is a disease. His paper, "Essay, Medical, Philosophical, and Chemical, on Drunkenness," created a stir in those days among medical practitioners in Great Britain. There are evidences that in the Roman period thinkers like Seneca had come to a similar conclusion. Of course, deliberate and systematic studies on the cause of alcoholism and remedy for it have been made for the last fifty years. But the most effective efforts have been made during the last quarter century.

Some are of the opinion that alcoholism is created by physiological defects. Dr. James J. Smith, who is of this school, says:

"Our laboratory and clinical studies of alcoholism during the past several years have convinced us that alcoholism is a metabolic disease. . . ."[3] Some medical authorities feel that physiological changes in the endocrine glands create the craving for alcohol. According to them, certain deficiencies in the chemicals of the body create the appetite.

Others are of the opinion that alcoholism is psychological or psychogenic. Dr. James H. Wall writes that "compulsive drinking is a symptom and a result of personality disorder."[4] Others again think that the conditions of life—family situations and environmental factors—create the desire for alcohol, although the metabolic condition brings about a predisposition for the addiction. Some conclude that heredity is the cause.

All these factors are contributing causes in this unfortunate disease, although we feel that the psychological element is the most important, both as cause and as cure. However, physical and environmental conditions must be taken fully into account in handling individuals suffering from chronic alcoholism.

Not all those who drink alcoholic beverages are habitual drinkers. They may be classified in different groups such as social drinkers, occasional drinkers, heavy drinkers, and chronic alcoholics. It is known, however, that many of the social drinkers can become alcoholics, even though they start with the idea of enjoying fun, entertainment, and sociability. Many young people begin drinking in order to avoid being called sissies. We have seen and known many persons who have become real alcoholics though they started in fun.

The individual suffers physically after he or she becomes a confirmed alcoholic. The nervous system is seriously damaged, producing all sorts of functional ailments or nerve diseases. Many of the deficiency diseases are created by heavy drinking. Cirrhosis of the liver is one of the characteristic diseases. Some are of the opinion that cancer may be caused by irritation from alcohol;[5]

[3] James J. Smith, "A Medical Approach to Problem Drinking. Preliminary Report," *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* (September, 1949). Dr. Smith is Director of Research on Alcoholism in New York University, Bellevue Hospital Medical Center.

[4] James H. Wall, "Psychotherapy of Alcohol Addiction in a Private Mental Hospital," *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* (March, 1945).

[5] Haggard & Jellinek, *Alcohol Explored*, p. 193.

although this has not been sufficiently supported by scientific investigation. All authorities agree, however, that heavy drinking has a serious effect on the physical system.

Our own study of this disease is based on observation of psychological and religious causation and remedies. In spite of the physical elements that are involved, mere physical treatment in the form of medication and creation of repulsion, and building up of nerve and other deficiencies, does not stabilize an alcoholic and thereby stop his heavy and "must" drinking. So we offer suggestions for both therapists and patients.

We observed in Chapters I and III that there are persons who take to drinking as a result of mental disturbances. The consciousness of guilt with the abnormal thought of sinfulness may cause an individual to drink in order to forget or "escape" his sense of guilt and sin. Some drinkers develop the habit because of inadequacy in life, frustration and tension created by conflicting emotions. Dissatisfaction with the environment, the family situation, or occupation can also create a mental state which stimulates the desire for alcohol and narcotics as a release from tension and frustration. Sometimes, disturbances between husband and wife create tension which in turn becomes a cause of alcoholism. Many persons take to drinking in order to punish themselves or the other person concerned. We know a couple who have marital conflict because of differences in ideals, attitudes, and habits of life. The husband drinks not only because of frustration but also to punish himself. In another situation, a wife took up drinking in order to embarrass her husband. It can also be construed that she wanted to relieve the tension caused by the conflict between herself and her husband. As in the case of the professional man, described in Chapter I, there are similar instances of people turning to alcohol in order to forget the memory of unpleasant experiences. Maladjustment in the intimate marital relationship can also drive a man or woman to alcohol. From the study of many situations we are compelled to conclude that the psychological element is of vital importance in considering the solution of the disease.

Hindu psychology not merely gives conceptual knowledge of the different states of mind and their functioning but it also teaches us how the emotions can be unified, redirected, and in-

tegrated. Its great emphasis is on the development of will.[6] Stress is given to the potential power of the individual and methods for bringing out his inner strength, so that he himself can overcome his moral and psychological difficulties, including the habit of drinking. The conditions which produce the different types of alcoholism cannot be changed unless the total mind—thinking, feeling, and will—is harmoniously developed and integrated. We have seen time and again that individuals realize their moral inadequacy in their emotional reactions as well as in the formation of the drinking habit. They do not have sufficient will power to stop drinking, even though they realize the baneful effect on themselves and on those around them. Until a person develops will power along with the cultivation of moral responsibility, from the psychological and religious point of view, he is not able to overcome the drinking habit.

Swami Vivekananda gives the message of strength. Again and again he insists that man must recognize and unfold his inner potentialities. He says: "Strength is life; weakness is death. Strength is felicity, life eternal, immortal; weakness is constant strain and misery . . ."[7] Then: "Strength is the medicine for the world's disease."[8] And again:

> Men are taught from childhood that they are weak and sinners. Teach them that they are all glorious children of immortality, even those who are the weakest in manifestation. Let positive, strong, helpful thought enter into their brains from very childhood. Lay yourselves open to these thoughts, and not to weakening and paralysing ones. . . . the infinite strength of the world is yours. Drive out the superstition that has covered your minds. Let us be brave. Know the Truth and practice the Truth. The goal may be distant, but awake, arise, and stop not till the goal is reached.[9]

There is a psychophysical parallelism (or interaction) as Professor Münsterberg and many other psychologists have concluded. The physical effects of alcoholism surely have bearing on mental states. It is our conviction that the psychological element is the starting point of the drinking habit, even though recent experiments suggest that there is considerable physical involvement. Once a person starts drinking alcohol his body begins to require it. This requirement disorganizes the mental condition which

[6] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology*, chap. V, "Will and Personality."
[7] *Works*, II, 3. [8] *Ibid.*, 201. [9] *Ibid.*, 87.

again stimulates more desire to drink. In this way the individual enters a vicious circle. The mind functions considerably through the nervous system, and when mental disturbances arise, the nervous system is affected, the glands react, and vice versa. However, beyond the purely physical aspects of this sickness, attention should be given to strengthening and stabilizing the mind. Dr. Richard R. Peabody has this to say in his helpful book, *Common Sense of Drinking*:

> As the body and mind are indivisible parts of the same organism, the mind is naturally much more efficient in the vigorous execution of new ideas if it is functioning in a sound body. . . .[10]

Many psychotherapists use what they call causative treatment. They try to remove the patient's emotional conflict and his inability to adjust himself to the different conditions of life through various methods of psychotherapy seeking out the cause. Others suggest a substitutive treatment by giving new channels of emotional satisfaction.[11]

Alcoholics Anonymous is also doing splendid work in the form of group therapy. This organization gives both psychological and religious satisfaction, and under the leadership and guidance of Boston specialists like Dr. Flemming, Yale specialists, and other such medical authorities, is accomplishing a great deal. Many religious leaders are also helping the heavy drinkers of different categories.

From the point of view of Hindu psychology, we can offer some constructive ideas for remedial purposes. Hindu psychologists recognize that the first requirement for the sick person is the cultivation of the desire for recovery from the illness. Herein lies the utility of the presence of the psychotherapist, counselor, or religious leader. The person who is suffering from this disease generally cannot get a desire for recovery without outside help. In many instances, the members of the family, being victims of the alcohol problem, lose patience and take disparaging and discouraging attitudes toward the drinker. A religious teacher or therapist can be helpful if he is extremely patient, affectionate,

[10] Richard R. Peabody, *The Common Sense of Drinking* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1931), p. 188.

[11] The chapter on Inebriety in Haggard and Jellinek, *Alcoholism Explored*, deals extensively with these two methods.

and sympathetic to the suffering person. Alcoholics are not merely sinful persons, as it is frequently construed, even though their condition is often due to moral defects. They are suffering from mental and physical deficiencies; and as such they need consideration and affection, not criticism and condescending treatment. Even if they are "sinners," they merit equal love. The psychotherapists and religious leaders must communicate a sense of deep interest in clients or students and in their recovery. Sympathetic treatment inspires patients to cultivate the desire for recovery.

A veteran came to his religious leader, attracted by his teachings. He was a regular alcoholic. With encouragement, sympathy, and affection from his teacher, he became a thoroughgoing follower of his teachings. He not only gave up his old habit but he changed his ways of life thoroughly. It is also found that when affection and sympathy are not shown, one cannot do anything for the alcoholics. We know another veteran intimately who is not yet changing the course of his life because he is not getting what is a basic requirement for such a sick person, namely, healthy occupation, kind atmosphere, affectionate surroundings. Above all he needs much encouragement. We are convinced that if this young man could be persuaded to believe that he has the capacity to get out of his illness, if he could be given a healthy occupation in a harmonious, friendly atmosphere, and he could remain in contact with an affectionate and sympathetic religious leader for some time, he could recover. The time element is important, as we have seen in the case of the professional man, because it takes time to form new habits of emotional satisfaction and cultivation of dynamic conviction within his own capacity. Swami Vivekananda's message of strength is important in the process of reintegration.

In the second place, proper medication under the supervision of a good physician is of vital importance in extreme cases. Some physicians make use of antabuse, but it has been known to have no durable effect. Aversion treatment or conditioned reflex treatment may be effective in some situations provided that psychotherapy is used along with it. Use of vitamins and the temporary use of sedatives and drugs have often helped immensely. In the early stages of drinking, nonalcoholic hot beverages can remove

the desire for alcohol. Such hot drinks may, for example, be helpful if given regularly to the potential alcoholic on his return home from work. This simple treatment has been very beneficial in many cases where the drinking habit is not far advanced.

As a third requirement, the patient should have a certain type of occupation to keep his mind engaged, provided that he is kept in a harmonious atmosphere where he will not be looked down upon because of his illness. It should be kept constantly in mind that these patients have definite problems of maladjustment and a deep sense of insecurity and such other mental and emotional disturbances. They are often very sensitive. Knowing this, the members of the family, co-workers, and therapists should always encourage alcoholics and eliminate the idea that they are ineffectual in their interpersonal relationships and adjustments in life. As we have stressed in other chapters in regard to mental and emotional integration, they should be taught gradually the ways of adaptability. It is indeed a process of re-education, as some of the clinical psychologists would say.

The next point to be remembered is to create confidence in the patients in the performance of their respective duties and in their own capacity for harmonious and normal interpersonal relationships.

The practice of concentration and meditation, discussed in Chapter XVI, is extremely important.[12] It is true that it takes time to develop will power. But we have seen time and again that as a man begins his practice of meditation and other devotional exercises and follows the requirements mentioned above, he forms new habits of adjustment and satisfaction in social contacts and successful execution of his duties and responsibilities. He learns to face the realities of life, instead of avoiding them. With this method, alcoholics and drug-addicts can develop sufficient will power to cast off the baneful habit of drinking and taking of narcotics. The problems of alcoholism can be overcome if the patients are under the guidance of an integrated therapist or religious leader who has sympathy for the patients and if the patients have confidence in him.

The most important requirement advanced by Hindu psychology, is to strengthen their conviction that they are inseparably

[12] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology*, chap. V, "Will and Personality."

connected with God. They are potentially divine. As Sankara says: "The human soul is divine." And as Swami Vivekananda says:

> Each soul is potentially divine.
>
> The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal.
>
> Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.
>
> This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.[13]

The patients should constantly be guided to believe that they are not useless and worthless persons. The mine of strength is within them. Therapists and religious leaders should definitely inculcate this idea in them time and again. It creates conviction in the drinkers and in their potentialities. They can also be helped to remember that their neighbors and colleagues are not essentially superior to them. Just because drinkers cannot do exactly what their friends and acquaintances do, they need not feel that they are inferior and incapacitated. They, too, can succeed in something in which they can be effective. It should be noted here that with this understanding of the divinity of man and his real nature, or their inseparable connection with God, they can succeed in everything. This will take away the paralyzing and hypnotic suggestions of their inadequacy and insufficiency. This spirit of divinity of man should be inculcated in the patients. They themselves should remember this. It is the duty of the therapist and religious leader to strengthen this conviction in their patients in every possible way. The reading of encouraging and elevating religious books and discussion with persons who can inspire them individually and in groups, are very helpful.

The question may arise as to whether a person not interested in religion can be helped. Our answer is that if the therapist can inspire the patient by his own integrity and personality, and above all by his sympathy and patience, he can help and cure an alcoholic by his life if not by his beliefs. Of course, we believe that if a person can be consciously influenced by religious ideals, the result will be more effective for the development of the total personality. But religion is a power greater than any creed. Religious practices develop will power to avoid alcoholism.

[13] *Works,* I, 118.

CHAPTER X

Power of Mind

THERE is tremendous power inherent in the mind. Unfortunately, few people realize that they possess this power and they behave as if they were weak and have nothing to contribute to this world and their own happiness. If they would study their own mind they would find the strength in it and they would be able to use it to their own advantage and for the benefit of others.

All of the achievements of human society are the direct result of the power of mind. Scientific discoveries are made because of intellectual power. The scientist concentrates his mental forces on his work; he gets sudden flashes of knowledge. He applies his findings in experiments and contributes something to the world for the control of nature. Primitive man was frightened and mystified by the forces of nature. He identified them with divine power and worshipped them. Today, with his intellectual achievements modern man challenges the forces of nature without fear. He controls and uses them for both constructive and destructive purposes.

All the joys that people have in life—aesthetic, artistic, poetic, literary—are direct contributions of the human mind. Primitive man did not know how to use his mind; consequently, he was completely oblivious of his mental powers and he could not share his ideas. He might have felt inspiration from the beauties of nature but he was unable to express it. In a cultured society the sense of beauty can be communicated. The poetry of Browning, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and of Shakespeare above all, the works of Hindu poets and dramatists like Kalidas and Girish Ghosh, or German writers like Goethe and Schelling, and French

writers like Molière and Racine, give an intense aesthetic intellectual satisfaction. The masterpieces of some of the great composers of Europe are tremendously inspiring. The religious music of the Hindu composers Tansen, Surdas, Mirabai, and Tagore is wonderful and transports one to a higher plane of consciousness.

Although an individual has the greatest joy in life when he uses fully his powers of mind, many people are not aware of this. Most people are still frightened by nature; consciously or unconsciously, the primitive tendency lingers because of ignorance of the physical constitution. Many persons are frightened by disease. It is true that influenza, colds, virus infections, and such diseases are prevalent all over the world. Cancer, malaria, tuberculosis, and bubonic plague are destructive ailments. People have reason to be afraid of them. Fear of them disturbs the mind, creating many functional diseases. Little do they understand that the mind has the power at least to overcome psychosomatic diseases, as we explained in the first chapter. So even from a medical point of view it is worth while to remember that the mind is inherently powerful. If people do not manifest that mental power, they succumb to all kinds of little disturbances and cannot even keep their bodies healthy.

The question will arise: If it is an accepted fact that everyone possesses a powerful mind, then why don't they use it? The answer is that most people are not aware that they possess it. Suppose that a man leaves his friend a legacy of a million dollars in the bank. If the friend does not know that he possesses this money he will not use it. He will not be benefited by it even though it may be in his name. Only when he knows about it can he do anything with it. The same is true of mental power. Then also a man must know how to use what is in his possession and not dissipate it. The parable of the prodigal son is an illustration of this point.

> And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.
>
> And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.[1]

[1] Luke 15: 13-14.

A man may possess wealth but he can dissipate everything by not knowing how to make the best use of it. Similarly, even if a person knows that he has power of mind and can use it, he can still direct it for destructive purposes, as we find in the case of many scholars and scientists who misused that power by discovering implements for the destruction of humanity during the last World War. It is true that theoretical scientists like Einstein and others gave the basic ideas of atomic energy, yet other men with great mental powers used them for destructive purposes and thereby helped to demoralize humanity. Other scholars have become disintegrated themselves and have had to be hospitalized as the result of inordinate ambition and emotional tension, due to improper use of their minds. Dr. Carl Binger[2] and others, discussing the principles of psychosomatic medicine, indicate what a devastating effect the misuse of the mind has on the human personality.

In a mysterious way human beings remain oblivious of what they possess. The Hindus call this ignorance *Maya* or nescience, a cosmic ignorance which covers man's true nature and gives rise to something else. They give a pertinent illustration. On a dark night when a person sees the trunk of a tree, he takes it to be a ghost, thief, friend, policeman, and so forth, according to his preconceived notion. When people have preconceived notions about certain things they interpret them as they like. Suppose someone has an idea that certain types of persons are no good. The moment he sees a man of that type he jumps to the conclusion that the man is no good. He does not have the objectivity to discriminate.

Recently the editor of a religious journal requested us to write an article showing the relationship between the Hindus and the Christians. An eminently devout person wrote a letter criticizing the article, not from an objective or an intellectual point of view, but by attacking the personality of the writer. He did not know the writer at all, but he had formed an idea that certain persons are undesirable; therefore, he thought that a Hindu must be a bad person. He had no real knowledge of the writer's actual

[2] Carl Binger, *The Doctor's Job* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1947).

character. What can be done with such preconceived notions? Certainly, you cannot find the truth with them.

When people are hypnotized by themselves and by others, they cannot know what they are. If they have been constantly told that they are weaklings; that they are helpless; that they have nothing to contribute to themselves and to the world; how can they know what they possess? From our infancy our well-meaning parents, with their preconceived notions about the ways and behavior of children, impose certain ideas on us. Often we hear the remark: "Oh, this child does not know anything. He doesn't understand what is happening." How do they know how much the child understands? It is amazing to observe the intuitive or instinctive power of a child.

When one of our brother Swamis was very young, his older sister died during a cholera epidemic in India, leaving a little baby. Many other members of the family also died, leaving only an old grandmother and grandfather. That this little child felt what had happened to her life was indicated by the manner in which she behaved. She was actually afraid to meet anyone. It was interesting to observe how a little child, a few months old, could sense her loss. She could not be told that her mother and other relatives had died, as she was so young. Yet that baby knew what was missing in her life. People do not realize how much a child senses and feels, yet they say: "This child does not understand anything." They inculcate certain habits in the children because of their own actions.

Take lying, for instance. Parents may often lie, not thinking that the child will learn to do the same thing. When a telephone call comes, the mother tells Johnnie: "Say that Mother is out." He is taught to lie without thinking about it. Then when he lies in some other way the mother scolds and disciplines him. In an unintentional way negative ideas are given to the children. Parents often almost hypnotize them with wrong impressions and ideas. Later on the children show them in their behavior pattern and their reactions to the world. They gradually lose the power to control, guide, or develop their own mind.

On the other hand, we know of parents or guardians who have encouraged their children tremendously. The hypnotic spell of "good for nothing" was broken. These children developed a

great deal of power in their lives as adults. In an Indian story there was a princess who was well-versed in Vedantic doctrines of life, immortality of soul, and divine power of man. When she was bringing up her little child, she would always sing the great words of Vedanta, "Thou art That, thou art divine." This little boy used to hear his mother humming over and over, "Thou art divine; thou art divine." As a result, when he grew up he manifested tremendous power of mind.

Just as negative ideas hynotize an individual, the positive, constructive, creative ideas dehypnotize him. He can bring out his latent power and show what he really is. Everyone needs to remind himself of the power that he possesses. If some modern scientists can control physical nature, we do not see why an individual cannot control his own physical nature. Whatever is in the macrocosm is in the microcosm also. If the forces of atomic energy can be controlled with the help of intelligence, surely a man can control the particles of his own body. Of course, even the scientists who have been using this atomic energy are now frightened by it themselves. Some thinkers in this country are frightened because the Russians are vigorously using the German scientists and accomplishing what this country has accomplished, and perhaps even more. They are afraid because they are not sure what the other fellow is doing; and they are oblivious of their own power.

Everyone should have the full knowledge of the power that he possesses as well as a proper understanding of its use. Most people are not able to express their power of mind even when they know they have it, because their will power is weak and their emotions disintegrated. Unfortunately, mere intellectual knowledge of mental power is not sufficient. Otherwise, the world would not be what it is today. At a recent conference, a philosopher said that the Sermon on the Mount has been taught to us for the last two thousand years; yet see what we have been doing. People may have intellectual knowledge of the Sermon on the Mount; they may have intellectual knowledge of the Gospel of Buddha or other such teachings; yet if their emotions are not integrated, their inner power cannot be manifested.

That is the reason that people have to go through certain types of psycho-physical exercise in order to maintain and develop

their mental powers. There may be a question that the term "psycho-physical," implies a parallelism between the mental and physical processes, as Professor Hugo Münsterberg and others in the West have thought. We wish to make our position clear that there is no dualism between mind and body; these two are not independent entities. They are interrelated and are the functioning of the same force in grosser and subtler forms. For the sake of understanding, we can safely say that for the time being the mind is dependent upon the body. When the body is disturbed or agitated, the mind is also disturbed. On occasions when the nerves are disturbed, the mind is also jumpy; and when the mind is in this state the nerves become shattered. When the mind is serene the nerves behave properly; it works both ways.

Can the mind act independently of the nervous system?[3] First, let us think of the things that we observe through the nervous system with our sense organs and instruments. A person sees a flower and smells the fragrance. This experience stimulates the nervous system and consequently the mental process. The individual thinks; he has an emotional or intellectual reaction, good or bad; and when the reaction is strong, he acts. These three functions: thinking, feeling, and willing, go together. They are interrelated and are constantly stimulated by certain sense perceptions. The mind functions in this way now, but there comes a time in the life of an individual when the mind can act independently of the nervous system. It does not then depend on direct sense perceptions. In this connection, we think of what some Western psychologists call extrasensory perception.[4] The mind possesses the power to see things, not through the medium of sense contact yet just as directly and immediately as things are ordinarily perceived through the senses. The mind possesses the power to perceive what is going on in distant places and also on a subtle plane beyond the range of ordinary perception. These subtle powers are popularly known as psychic and occult powers. There are many fraudulent claims, yet many cases are

[3] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology*, pp. 30-32. According to Hindu psychologists, the internal sense or implement for perception is the *indriya*. Although it operates through the outer sense organs and the nervous system it is independent of them.

[4] *Ibid.* chaps. IX and X.

authentic and have been verified.[5] These experiences may be misconstrued by many objective scientists as illusory and imaginary; but the investigations of psychical research societies and psychologists, such as Professor Joseph B. Rhine, Professor Gardner Murphy, and their colleagues, suggest to us that these experiences are within the range of the human mind. Indian psychologists, like Patanjali and others, not only believe in the possibility of such experiences but also give methods for developing these subtle mental powers through the practice of concentration.[6]

Indian psychologists are emphatic in their declaration of the existence of these subtle powers and of the possibility of developing them through exact scientific methods of subjective experimentation. When a man develops subtle powers of mind, he can perceive things directly and immediately without the medium of the sense organs and nervous system. That is the time the mind perceives things as they really are and not through interpretation. Even the great scientists, who are supposed to be objective, perceive things through interpretation of the mind. That is the reason that Professor A. S. Eddington, in his *Philosophy of Physical Science,* comes to the conclusion that even scientific objective knowledge is relative.[7] For the same reason philosopher Kant tells us that the thing-in-itself is unknown and unknowable. What we know of the world or of the thing is nothing but the interpretation of the way the thing-in-itself affects our consciousness.[8] Professor Eddington comes to his conclusion from scientific observation while philosopher Kant gets his knowledge, understanding, or flash through the flight of intellectualism or reasoning. Both of them, practically, come to the same conclusion as some of the Hindu philosophers do, namely, that *Brahman* or Reality cannot be perceived by the mind. The Hindu philosophers go a little further and say that there comes a stage in the

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali,* chap. III. See also "Raja Yoga," *Works,* I.

[7] A. S. Eddington, *Philosophy of Physical Science* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1939).

[8] Immanuel Kant, *Critik der Reinen Bernunft* (Riga: verlegts Johann Friederich Hartknoch, 1781). See also *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason,* trans. F. Max Müller (London: Macmillan & Co., 1881), Vol. II; and *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason,* trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: The Humanities Press, 1950); and other translations.

course of the mind's development when the transformed mind perceives the Reality. In its present state, the mind functions as the body dictates or as the nerves react. Today there is a little change in the climate or there is a little physical irritation and the person becomes sick. Tomorrow there may be some other disorder of the body and the person becomes irritable. We see how the experience of physical change colors his perception. He may think he is independent, but he is a slave to the body for the time being. That is the reason the great Hindu teachers tell us that we have to go through psycho-physical exercises for the time being, so that the body may remain fairly healthy. We say fairly healthy rather than perfect. Perfection of the body is a misnomer, for the body constantly changes. When the body is fairly normal, then it does not disturb a person's mind with too many ailments. This is the time to dehypnotize the mind and manifest its power.

When a person does certain spiritual exercises or practices concentration or meditation, he finds that the latent power of the mind emerges. As he goes through these practices his emotions become organized and unified. People may find it difficult to understand and control the emotions. We do not ask anyone to repress his emotions; rather we ask him to transform or change the course of these emotions and direct them to higher channels to the divine. When he gradually succeeds in doing this, then the mental forces and emotions will be purified. Along with this redirection of the emotions, comes the practice of concentration. This practice unifies all the mental forces. When the mind is focused on anything, it has to remain quiet. A man who is performing experiments in the scientific laboratory is absorbed there because all other thoughts or emotional reactions are eliminated. When a mother is giving attention to the child all other thoughts are eliminated from her mind. When an artist is painting a picture, all other ideas or emotions are temporarily put aside. When a man concentrates his mind on God, all other ideas, associations, and emotions are forgotten. Of course, it is difficult to attain to that state or remain in it. Yet through practice and detachment one can attain it. Sri Krishna tells us: "Without doubt . . . the mind is restless, and difficult to control; but through practice and renunciation . . . it may be governed."[9] Again He says:

[9] *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita* VI: 18.

"When the completely controlled mind rests serenely in the Self alone, free from longing after all desires, then is one called steadfast, (in the Self)."[10] Similarly, Patanjali, the father of Hindu psychology, says that by these two methods of detachment and constant practice, the "uncontrollable" mind can be subdued.

All latent powers of the mind are manifested when integration takes place. We then know the real dynamics of the mind. At that time functional diseases vanish. When a man has no emotional conflict, frustration, sense of insecurity, he has no anxiety or worry and his mind is peaceful. He may have organic trouble because of his age; or his body may deteriorate; or he may get some other disease; but he will not have functional trouble produced by the disturbed condition of the emotions. His nerves will remain strong and he can accomplish what he wishes, fully controlling his physical reaction. Some people have seen cancer patients. The excruciating pain a patient suffers cannot be described. Sri Ramakrishna had cancer of the throat. When the doctors would go to treat it, He would say to them: "Wait a minute." After a short time He would add: "Now you can go on." He had withdrawn His mind completely from the body. Then the doctors could do anything, for He could not feel it. We never saw Sri Ramakrishna; we saw His disciples. Swami Turiyananda, one of the disciples, had to undergo a serious operation. His heart was weak because of age and long suffering. The doctors were hesitant about giving him an anesthetic. They reported this to Swami Brahmananda, our Master, who was then President of the Ramakrishna Mission. Swami Brahmananda went to the bedroom of the sick Swami and said: "You will just have to endure!" The Swami replied: "Yes, Maharaj, certainly." And all the preparations were made for this major operation in his room. He began to talk about *Brahman* to some of the young Swamis who were present while the operation was going on. The surgeon was amazed. After finishing everything he asked: "Swami, can you sing a song?" And Swami Turiyananda sang a devotional song. His mind was completely withdrawn from the body. There was not the slightest distortion of the facial muscles during the operation.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that when Jesus was crucified,

[10] *Ibid,* VI: 35.

He withdrew His mind completely from His body; He was in another state altogether, a state of *samadhi* or superconsciousness. The nails pierced through His body but the mind was unaffected. Sri Ramakrishna gave an illustration of how this could happen. When the coconut is not yet ripe, the fibers, kernel, and shell are inseparable. But when the coconut is ripe, the kernel becomes separate. You can shake it and feel the kernel jump around inside. When a person is thoroughly established in higher spiritual practices, his mind and body become separated. His soul is separate, too.

The objective of everyone should be to bring out his own mental power. Many of us may say that we are not like Christ, Sri Ramakrishna, or Swami Turiyananda. We are ordinary people. It is true that we are ordinary in the usual sense; but we still have that divine spark; we still possess that mine of power in us. The difference is that we have hypnotized ourselves and we are continuing to do so. However, we can be dehypnotized by constant, positive thoughts, like the child of the Indian princess. We should remind ourselves that we are divine. We should remind ourselves that there is a reservoir of strength within us. We should tell ourselves that the petty changes in the world should not affect our mind. How disturbed we become if a man looks this way or talks that way! How the little things disturb and agitate us and make our minds go to pieces! The more we give our attention to higher phases of life the less we shall be affected by adverse circumstances. We do not know if anyone can be found who is not subject to them. Even Jesus and Sri Ramakrishna had their sad experiences. Jesus, an incarnation of God, was crucified. Can anyone think that there will not be any change of condition in this life? It is unthinkable to look at things in this light. We have to face conditions as they are. We have to be unaffected by them and manifest our hidden, latent power of mind. We have no reason for frustration and conflict. We can overcome anxiety and apprehension. We possess the power to face the problems of life and internal and external changes; and we have the power to overcome all mental weaknesses. Then we can dehypnotize ourselves and gradually manifest our will power, so that we can carry out the ideas that we have in life for our own betterment and for the good of society.

In giving attention to the Abiding Spirit we will find that mental power will be manifest. It is nothing unusual. The difference that we see between one man and another and their achievements is due to the degree of manifestation of mental power. Some cultivate and express it, in different spheres of life, while others dissipate it and become disintegrated. It is of primary importance for everyone to consider how to use the best we have in us to full advantage. Then alone can we contribute something worth while to our life and to the lives of others. No great contribution can be made to life by a disturbed mind. Disturbances of the mind can be fully controlled as we manifest the real power in us and become free. Then we can say: "Mind can bind one; mind can liberate one."

CHAPTER XI

Power of Love

THE vast majority of those who seek a higher life find it most attractive to follow the path of love because it is a natural expression of the human mind. Swami Vivekananda says that through the expression of love individuals can establish emotional relationships with the Supreme Being, with Bliss Itself. However, many will ask: "How can you say that the path of love is so enjoyable? We show our love to others and then we suffer." That is true; but it is envy, jealousy, and such tendencies that rob the people of joy or bliss of love. Unfortunately, many suffer from these tendencies. So we should clarify the meaning of love. Although there is much talk about it among different religious groups, few understand its true nature. Consequently, they get into difficulties.

In life we observe three types of love. The first form of love is immature and childish. Children have their minds focused on themselves. This is generally regarded as narcissism or self-love, according to the mythical story of Narcissus. A child begins his life with this attitude but he must outgrow it and expand himself if he wants to live the fullness of life. When individuals remain self-centered they invariably become anti-social, unhappy, and consequently neurotic. Professor O. Hobart Mowrer, in his experience with clinical psychology, gives clear insight into the problems of immature love relationships.[1] Immature love is based on selfish expectations. This should hardly be called love. Many

[1] O. Hobart Mowrer, *Neurosis and Its Treatment* (Chicago: The Delphinian Society, 1949), p. 757. (Reprinted from *Patterns for Modern Living*, Division I, "Psychological Patterns").

people direct their sentiment to the object of affection but they expect everything in return. Therefore, they are often disappointed. They continually demand and expect attention in material things or emotional demonstration. The average person asks before he gives; he figures how much he will get out of giving. Often the sacred matrimonial relationship is established on this basis. We can cite a number of cases illustrating this fact.

A man began to give a great deal of attention to the young daughter of a friend of ours, who was to inherit a great fortune. She was flattered by the unusual attention of this man and she lost herself in his emotional expressions to the point that she was persuaded to marry him secretly. It soon became evident that he married her only for the fortune of her wealthy parents. After a few years, this fact was proven by his ill treatment of her when her parents would not become reconciled with either of them and it became evident that he had no hope of sharing in the fortune. As a result of her frustration and disappointment, this girl lost her mental control, for she really believed in his love for her. The mother had to go all the way to California from the Eastern part of the country to rescue her from an institution where her husband had placed her. Even though she was rescued from her designing husband, this experience created such a disturbance in her mind that she ultimately committed suicide—a victim of selfish and insincere love.

There have been many such marriages and love affairs which were motivated by material gain and emotional expectation. Invariably, these situations satisfy neither the lover nor the beloved. People cannot have satisfaction when they do not give love. This kind of emotion is not love; it is fascination based on gain. Consequently, there is no joy in it, since the persons who are always demanding are bound to be frustrated. Besides, the object of the supposed love will sooner or later realize the base motive of the other individual. Then there will be no warmth of affection and no understanding, even though they may have been present in the beginning due to a certain kind of attraction.

This situation is not only present in worldly associations; amazingly enough it exists even in religious expressions. The majority of people approach God to get something out of Him. There are some persons who are associated with religion in order

to attain health, wealth, prosperity, name, fame, and so on. Sometimes they join certain religious organizations thinking that it will be profitable for their social or economic position. Many of them associate with religious organizations because they will gain prestige, in the same way that a college degree is often taken to get prestige.

We know of interesting cases of this kind, where the individuals were interested in worldly achievements. About ten years ago a young lady came to us because she was disturbed about certain problems in her life. During her association with us, her mother-in-law insisted that her husband join a particular church so that both his social position and his job might be secure. The lady finally joined that church with her husband. Some time ago, another man joined a religious group because he was a "social climber" and he knew that there were a number of people with wealth and social position in that group. He had not the slightest intention of any kind of religious development. Later on, when he had established his prestige he left the group, showing that his expectation had been satisfied without love of God.

So there are many who think in terms of: "Oh God, give me this; give me that." Once the great Mohammedan Emperor of India, Akbar, met a holy man. He wanted to offer something to this holy person so he begged of him: "Come to my palace so that I may present you with a gift." The offer was accepted and they arrived at the palace just at the time of prayer. The Emperor knelt and began to pray aloud. When the holy man heard the Emperor's words "Oh God, give me . . ." he got up and started to walk away. Akbar finished his prayer and saw him leaving. He ran after him and asked: "Sir, why are you going away without accepting my gift?" The holy man replied: "Well, I do not want anything from a beggar. You are seeking this and that from God. What can you give to me?"

It is interesting that not only many ordinary people seek money, health, prosperity, children, home, success, power, position, and everything else from God but also many so-called religious persons, who use their relationship with God or man to get something. They love God with the hope of getting their own way.

The second form of love includes a sense of mutuality. I give

and you give. I worship God and He gives me something. I love my children and they return that love. It may be love, consideration, or security that is involved; but whatever it may be, it is mutual. No doubt this form of love is better than the spirit of demanding. Where there is all expectation there is sure to be envy or jealousy. In this second form, too, envy and jealousy are often observed. When a person gives love, affection, thought, and consideration with expectation of return, he becomes jealous if anyone seems to come between him and the object of his affection. Parents become jealous of their children or the children of their parents. A father becomes jealous of his child lest it usurp the affection of his wife. A mother becomes jealous of her grown-up daughter or son lest he or she take away part of her husband's love. It is a pathological condition but it is present in the competitive societies of the modern world.

We have known cases where our services were required for young married couples because one or the other was jealous of the mother-in-law for fear that she would continue her attention to her son or daughter, as the case might be. These situations are not as rare as we may want to think. So even though this second form of love is nobler than the first, it is still full of anxiety, apprehension, worry, and other disturbing elements. Consequently, even this does not satisfy the inner nature of man and does not give the real joy of love. There have been many persons who transcended the sense of expectation and selfishness even in this form of mutual love and they have become extremely unselfish, devoting themselves to the good and happiness of the beloved. This cooperative love has the possibility of gradual evolution through unselfishness.

In the field of religion, also, we find many persons who give up their interest when they find they cannot get something out of God in return for their devotion. We remember a man who lost his religious incentive because a tidal wave in New England destroyed so many lives and so much property in 1938. Some people lose their religious intensity when they face misfortune or changes in life, thinking that God has not given them what they deserved in return for their devotion and prayers to Him.

The third form of love has no such elements because the lover gives and gives and demands nothing and expects nothing ma-

terial in return, even though he receives from his beloved what is required. There is no sense of demanding in this form of love. If love comes, well and good. If it does not, well and good. "I do not care for anything in return for my love." Love is unmercenary. There are few persons in the world, even those associated with friends and relatives, who have the sentiment of giving with no thought of return. There are a few, a blessed few, who offer themselves wholly to God, who express love for Him without caring for any reward from Him. The moment a person expects anything in return for his love, that moment the joy of love goes and it deteriorates to the level of the shopkeeper. This is described by Swami Vivekananda in one of his poems:

> Aye, born heir to the Infinite thou art,
> Within the heart is the ocean of Love,
> "Give," "give away,"—whoever asks return,
> His ocean dwindles down to a mere drop.[2]

Girish Ghosh, the great Indian dramatist, composed a hymn describing the highest state of love. "Oh, why does a lover want love! The moment you give and take and exchange your love, that very moment the whole of love vanishes. The joy of love disappears." How true this is! Few persons can understand the depth of this idea. A real lover does not even expect kindness from the beloved. Even though he may be kicked, he still pours out his love. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." This does not mean that he is a masochist in finding satisfaction through punishment and humiliation; it means only forgiveness and endurance under all conditions because of the intense love for the beloved.

There may be a misunderstanding that this third form of love means a sense of superiority or condescension. In the act of so-called charity one has a sense of superiority, feeling that he possesses something more than another which he is giving to fulfill the requirements of the other. But in the third form of love there is no such consciousness in the lover. He does not even remain self-conscious in the act of love. In fact, he loses himself in it. As a poet has said: "I lost myself in Him." When a man directs this kind of love to God he does not demand anything from Him nor does he expect anything in return. He pours out

[2] *Works,* IV, 429.

his love to God without being conscious of this act. Nevertheless, he receives intense love from God as well as everything that is required for his well-being. This attitude does not contradict the idea of loving cooperation between God and man, as advocated by the personalistic philosophers of America. Their attitude is that of the devotee who gives to God with no expectation of reward. This is cooperation in the higher sense of the term and not as the average man understands it in human relationships.[3] Sri Ramakrishna describes this love:

> The stage of devotion called *Bhava* is like an unripe mango; *Prema* is like the ripe fruit.
>
> *Prema* is like a string in the hands of the Bhakta [lover of God], binding him to that Sachchidananda [Existence-Knowledge-Bliss] which is God. The devotee holds the Lord, so to speak, under his control. God comes to him whenever he calls.[4]

It is so satisfying that the lover's whole being becomes full of joy, so much so that he has all the different spiritual realizations because of his love for God. Many devotees consider that spiritual realizations come in the form of revelation from God and the devotees or lovers have little part to play in them. However, we understand from the lives of the mystics and devotees of the different religions that the devotees have love from God and revelations or spiritual experiences of various types because they pour out their own love to Him. In fact, the devotees with intense love are sure to have all the experiences of God.

There is a story told in India about a lover by the name of Vilwamangal. He was in love with a prostitute who lived across the river from his house. Being the son of a wealthy man he gave everything to her to make her comfortable. He spent a lot of time with her, disregarding his own personal duties and responsibilities which were left with the servants. His love for her was so strong that even on the day of the funeral ceremony of his father he wanted to go to her. In the evening, after the ceremony, he left the rest of the details to his servants and started out. Just at that time a bad storm arose with thunder, wind, and torrential rain. His boat was washed away from the bank of the river, so

[3] Edgar Sheffield Brightman, *A Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1940), pp. 435-436. Also *Nature and Values* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945), p. 165.

[4] *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna* XXV: 527-528.

he jumped into the water and started to swim, so anxious was he to reach his beloved. He was becoming exhausted by the waves when he touched something in the dark that was floating near him. He caught hold of it and went the rest of the way across the river with its help. He was so intent on reaching the woman that he did not know that he was hanging on to a dead body. When he reached her place the gate was locked so he scaled the wall. When he was admitted to the house, the woman was frightened at his appearance; he was in such a pathetic condition. He was wet and covered with mud and blood and stood there looking at her. When she knew who he was she was amazed. "Well, are you mad that you come at this time of the night in the storm when everything is so bad?" she exclaimed. Then she added: "I understand that if a man loves God in this way he can realize God." At the moment Vilwamangal was unconscious of her words. He was only looking at her. But the words penetrated his mind. They meant the beginning of a change in him. His intense love for this woman was later turned to God and he became a saint. She, too, became a transformed person, when she realized what a change had taken place in her lover. His love for her and his spiritual power affected her immensely and transformed her. This happened because the man was a true lover.

We have seen people with a similar type of relationship who went to Swami Brahmananda, our beloved teacher. Because one of them was transformed by the divine love of Swami Brahmananda, the other also went through a real transformation, as we find in the story of Vilwamangal. Similar instances can be cited from the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and other great spiritual personalities.

There are some persons in this world who love each other without caring to get anything from the beloved. They love for the sake of love, as Swami Vivekananda tells us. Again, there are devotees who love God for the sake of love and for His own sake, without asking for something petty in return, even though there are some who ask for God's love and His revelation. Those who have a little glimpse of this love are full of joy which knows no bounds.

The vast majority of the people do not have the highest form of love in the beginning of their lives; however, they can culti-

vate it in the same way that they cultivate friendship and love on the human plane of existence. In human relationships people cultivate friendship by exchanging things or feelings. However, in most cases, if they do not give to their beloved, this very sentiment and joyous state of mind gradually vanish. So, in society, people have the custom of doing something for their friends. Take, for instance, the exchange of gifts that occurs during the Christmas or Easter seasons. Through this custom, individuals remember one another and express their love and sentiment for one another. People also seek the companionship of their friends and relatives for this reason. These expressions are necessary to foster and preserve the ties of affection.

Although it is true that many persons start to express their sentiment in its lowest form, a higher type of love can be developed gradually. Friendship has to be nurtured by unselfishness and the spirit of giving. The emotion of love will deteriorate when a person is not established in the highest form of love or does not cultivate it. We know many cases where selfishness has stood between persons and ruined not only their love but also their lives. It is worth while for everyone to detect the element of selfishness in his emotional life. Nothing ruins emotional joy more certainly than selfishness.

The person who bases his activities and expressions on egocentricity can never integrate his emotions. His only consideration will be for himself and how he reacts to another individual. He evaluates everything from that point of view. In a competitive society, which exists in the modern world, people have this egocentric, selfish attitude. The result is emotional starvation and deterioration of friendship and matrimonial relationship. Even the parent-child relationship becomes disappointing because of the egocentric attitude on the part of parents and children.

Family life, which should be based on love, is ruined in a competive society because of the invasion of selfishness. We know of one woman of high social status and economic security who came to us for advice. Her husband happened to be selfish in his reactions to any problems. Because of his egocentric attitude he wanted to get rid of his wife, in spite of twenty-five or more years of association. As he grew older, his egocentricity became

more and more evident. It affected his relationship with his grown-up children, which resulted in an all-round disturbance in the whole family. He was trying to find the reason for his difficulties in the little traits of his wife rather than in his egocentric attitude toward life. Our advice to the lady was to cultivate a great deal of patience and endurance and to rectify some of her traits which apparently had become causes of disturbance in the husband. She was also asked to go through regular spiritual exercises to integrate herself. Her husband was requested to understand the proper value of married life on the basis of cooperation and coordination. As time has passed, they have been considerably reconciled.

Another situation which has come to our attention is that of a young couple very much disturbed because of the selfishness of the husband in the intimate marital relationship. This is about to destroy their marriage. We have advised the husband to consider the requirements, aspirations, and desires of his wife. Personal interviews and instructions to both the man and the woman have helped in removing this barrier to their happiness and emotional satisfaction.

Selfishness is manifested in other forms in family life. Some time ago, a mature man in one of the large cities of the East became very interested in religion. His wife missed his attention and consequently became disturbed. Our advice to both of them was to give consideration to each other's welfare. It was not the religious attitude that disturbed the relationship but it was rather egocentricity and selfishness which caused the trouble. If husband and wife respect each other as spiritual beings their worldly relationships will take care of themselves.

On the other hand, a few years ago we met a lady who was deeply interested in religion. At first her husband showed sympathy and interest in her religious activities. However, when their intimate relationship was affected and his selfish expressions were curbed, his appreciation of religion wholly vanished. Our advice to both was to cultivate a real spirit of unselfish love.

In another situation a problem in relationship arose between a mother and daughter. The daughter became deeply interested in religious life and practices, which changed her total personality and way of life. Observing this radical change, the mother

also began to show interest in religion. Previous to this time her religious life had been practically nil. As the daughter progressed more and more, devoting considerable time to her spiritual exercises, studies, and consecrated work, and as she improved in her own personal work and duties, the mother gradually became disturbed. She did not like to see the radical transformation in her daughter. She probably felt inferior. The element of jealousy became extremely operative and seriously disturbed the relationship between them. Our advice was to both of them, just as it was to the husband and wife, that they should cultivate the spirit of unselfish love. The daughter should be allowed to develop in religious life in her own way; and the mother should also grow spiritually in her own way.

It is evident that when the emotions of love and affection are stirred without proper cultivation and expression, human nature deteriorates. Love is the integral part of the human mind; in fact, it is the most powerful drive in human nature. If individuals let it starve, they invariably pay bitterly.

Swami Vivekananda used to say: "Expansion is life; contraction is death." The smaller a person makes his circle of loving friends, the more interested he becomes in himself and the smaller he becomes. He gradually becomes emotionally emaciated which results in neurosis and often psychosis. When a person withdraws himself from social contact, which furnishes the background for the cultivation of the emotions, he becomes increasingly egocentric and selfish. He always considers his own little problems as the most important factors of life; and his mind may actually become pathological, even though he may hold a good position in business or in a profession. The power of love in its expression lifts man to a joyous state. On the other hand, its withdrawal makes one miserable and abnormal. So a person should always try to expand himself in the cultivation of love for normal life and behavior. He should deliberately cultivate higher emotions for friends and relatives through the exchange of loving expressions, based on the experience of divine love.

Cynicism is an unhealthy state of mind and a great barrier to proper emotional expression. It is often argued that people should have a critical attitude in life and objectivity in understanding human nature. When they continue to be critical in

the name of objectivity they become cynical and pessimistic. These attitudes are great obstacles to the manifestation of the power of love. A man who has these unfortunate traits of mind invariably loses his friends.

On the other hand, the man who has the opposite qualities attracts people to him as the magnet attracts iron. The great spiritual teachers who revolutionized society, civilization, and culture could do so because of their unselfish love for humanity. St. Francis of Assisi even made friends with animals because of his unselfish love. The same was true of Swami Vivekananda; his heart knew no bounds. Consequently, animals were attracted to him, not to speak of human beings. This type of love need not necessarily be limited to such personalities. We find this power of emotional expression in ordinary human beings. We know of a young man who, from his boyhood, was optimistic, sweet, and friendly to everyone. His genial temperament attracted men and women to him in great numbers. He expanded his life immensely, and his circle of friends increased so much that it is difficult for him to find time to satisfy the emotional cravings of his friends who are constantly seeking his loving expressions.

If anyone wants to have the joy of love, he has to cultivate it deliberately. Would to God we all had that intense, all-consuming love! Unfortunately, most people do not have it at present. Some young friends in Providence were surprised when we said in a lecture that most persons do not have love for God. When we discussed it together later they realized that actually they did not love Him. People have a kind of feeling or a kind of admiration for God or a fear of Him which may be mistaken for love. However, love can be cultivated if people think of Him and serve Him as if they loved Him.

In ordinary life, one person first sees another and then loves him. There is an exchange of feeling which intensifies the devotion. The intense love of a mother appears the moment she sees her baby. Similarly, in all other human relationships love occurs between persons who see each other. However, divine love has to be cultivated without seeing God for the time being. We seldom meet a person who can say: "Yes, I see God." We seldom find a person who can truthfully say that he experiences God. The question arises: What can an individual do to love God?

In the beginning, he assumes that he loves Him. This is what Swami Vivekananda calls the preparatory stage.[5] At first he feels only an attraction for God and then he cultivates love by doing something for Him. Herein lies the utility of devotional exercises, known also as spiritual practices or worship. These practices include concentration and meditation, repeating the name of God, and other such means of reminding one's self of Him. Worship in any form is nothing but a method of cultivating divine love. Through it the devotee thinks of Him and the thought brings out his emotions for Him. Divine love is in everyone; the Blissful One, that *Rasa*, that Supreme Being, is present in all. Consequently, our true nature is love, is bliss. There is no one in this world who has no possibility of love. Yet, in a mysterious, inexplicable way people cover their true nature, their love, and then they become selfish and egocentric.

As a person proceeds in the preparatory stage of devotion, he begins to feel joy. As we have mentioned, Swami Brahmananda used to tell us that next to the joy of the realization of God is the joy that one has in spiritual practices.[6] When the mind becomes free from the struggle of discipline, then the individual begins to enjoy his spiritual exercises.

A religious leader and his followers used to visit Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. Sri Ramakrishna also visited their group. In some of their prayers they expressed the idea: "With our devotion we make God enjoyable." Sri Ramakrishna said: "What are you talking about! You make God enjoyable! You give Him that! Your devotion does not make God blissful or joyous. He is Joy and Bliss Itself. Through your devotion and love you make yourselves fit to know how joyous He is. You do not give the quality of love to Him; He is Love Itself." The person who has a little glimpse of that Reality knows what He really is. He discovers God.

The vast majority of the people are afraid of God. In certain traditions, the followers are told that they must fear Him. It is true that beginners have fear, wonder, and admiration, as Sri Ramakrishna used to say. A child is afraid of an unknown person, but this does not mean that the unknown person is someone

[5] "Bhakti Yoga," *Works*, III, 70-80.
[6] *Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda*, p. 100.

to be feared. Sometimes, when a person is not known by others, they have misconceived ideas about him. Similarly, when a person does not know God, the human weaknesses of fear, wonder, reverence, and admiration are attributed to Him. Admiration and reverence are noble in certain respects, but they do not indicate the highest form of divine love in the personal relationship with God. The highest form of all-consuming divine love goes beyond these characteristics of reverence, wonder, and admiration. In human relationships one person cannot love another if he is afraid of Him. Neither can an individual love another if he admires his glory, success, or greatness. This attitude creates separation, distance between them. Religion may begin with admiration of God, with an appreciation of His vast, infinite nature and glory; but spiritual life goes beyond this. Fear, wonder, and admiration all vanish from the heart of a lover. We do not thereby mean that the lover does not admire, revere, and appreciate the love of the beloved; he only remains oblivious of these feelings because of his own love for his beloved. Love is sweet. There must be sweetness in the relationship; and this cannot be enjoyed as long as there is separation. As a person approaches God, the distance vanishes and He becomes the nearest and dearest and the sweetest of all. That is the reason that there is enjoyment in divine love. There is no pain in it. At a certain stage of spiritual life there may be a feeling of pain in the separation from God, but that pain is more than compensated by the realization of the Beloved.

As a person proceeds in his enjoyment of love, there is a feeling of intimacy with God, a sense that "I am my Lord's and He is mine." One of our great Swamis used to say that the moment a spiritual aspirant or devotee feels that God belongs to him and he belongs to God, at that moment spiritual practices are no longer needed. Although he continues with them for their enjoyment, he has reached what he wanted—an intimacy of union. This intimacy comes as one grows through devotional exercises or as this inherent love begins to manifest itself. Does not a mother feel intimacy with her child? Does not a lover feel intimacy with his beloved? This feeling of belonging, of union, is the culmination of love. At that time we find that Beloved and lover lose all sense of separation. The joy of love becomes

so intoxicating that a lover can hardly remain separated from the Beloved. Ultimately, they are united. As the devotees of Brindaban, in the Hindu tradition of India, used to say: "I am He; I am He!"[7]

Different periods in the life of Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna explicitly justify this statement of the devotees of Brindaban. We have seen that the great disciples of Sri Ramakrishna indicated that they realized this unity even though some of them started with the path of love, keeping themselves separate from the Beloved. Swami Shivananda, a great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and a mystic of the highest type, was primarily a devotee and lover of God of the third type, even though he often expressed the idea that he was one with God. In one of his inspiring letters to an American devotee he wrote: "I and the spirit are one. I know it and you will also be able to know it." The person who has a little glimpse of that joy of love is blessed and he makes others blessed by his very presence. He becomes a center of love and radiates that joy everywhere.

[7] *Bhagavatam*, chap. XI.

CHAPTER XII

Love, Marriage, and Religion

THE nature of the human mind and its inherent urges, tendencies, and emotions has already been discussed in previous chapters. The emotion of love is inherent in man; nay, it is the nature of the human soul. There is no one in the world who does not have the urge of love, no matter how imperfect he may seem to be. It is love that causes one person to sacrifice everything, even his life, for the good and happiness of his beloved. It is love that motivates man to reconstruct himself, establish a family, raise a culture, and build up a civilization. Again, it is ill-directed love that destroys human beings, society, and their culture, as we observe in contemporary history. This noble emotion of man can disintegrate a personality and interpersonal relationships when the emotions are uncontrolled, frustrated, and conflicting, as previous chapters have indicated. It is not the fault of love itself, but its misuse and abuse that creates so much trouble and disturbance. Love can be used for good or bad purposes when it is well-directed or ill-directed. However, the true nature of love is indeed constructive, harmonious, and unifying. It is the basic quality of the human soul; it is the urge which unifies one person with others. It is the connecting link between the lover and beloved. It culminates in the union of the two.

Therefore, it is worth while for us to consider the nature of love and its use. As we stated in Chapter XI, there are three forms of love manifest in human life, namely, demanding love, bartering love, and giving, unmercenary love. The first two forms do not fulfill the nature of real love; consequently, they are unsatisfactory and create disturbance, frustration, and disappointment.

Often they destroy the noble relationships of many human beings. On the other hand, the third form of love is a blessing in human life. If an individual is a real lover of the third type, it does not occur to him that he is sacrificing anything for the beloved; there is no calculation involved. This kind of love is as natural as breathing. It satisfies the inner nature of man, because his soul is what the Hindus call *ananda*, bliss. Since the human soul is inseparably related to God, its very nature is bliss. There is a statement in one of the Upanishads: "He is the bliss itself."

Any kind of emotion that limits or binds the true nature of the soul makes it unhappy and restless. In our everyday experiences we find that man is constantly restless because he is seeking the fulfillment of bliss within him. He is trying to find his real nature and to culminate in the glory of love by expanding his inner self. The moment there is tension, conflict, or frustration or lack of a healthy manifestation of this noble emotion, that very moment serious difficulty is created in the mind. Emotional disturbances also create serious functional ailments. When love, the basic quality of the human soul, does not have proper expression and does not fulfill its purpose—union with others—it creates a baneful effect in the emotional nature of man. Misbehavior and delinquency of children and youth, for instance, can be traced to lack of love on the part of the parents, other relatives, and society. Innumerable cases of behavior disturbances stem from this source.

Love makes one expand. Anything that contracts our inner nature and makes us withdraw from the process of spontaneous emotional evolution creates serious disturbances in life. We often observe that any man who does not have this process of expansion gradually withdraws to himself and becomes more and more selfish and self-centered. In course of time he is bound to be dissatisfied and unhappy. This progressive contraction of love creates difficulties in interpersonal relationships. Then man goes through a vicious circle. As he withdraws to himself and thinks of his own personal interests and thereby intensifies his egocentricity, he becomes unpopular, anti-social, and then he withdraws more and more. Indeed, this goes against the very basic nature of man. This is what the great Swami calls death. Jesus also

gave the same idea when He said: "He that saveth his life shall lose it."[1]

From our infancy we express and receive love. From our birth we would not exist if the mother did not love us. We would die but for the love and care of the mother. All of us remember our younger days when our mother nourished us with her love and protection. She did not calculate that her child would or would not give her anything. She gave spontaneously and never thought that she was sacrificing anything. It was her life to give. As we grow up the emotion of love expands to include brothers and sisters. Later, we express love to neighbors, playmates, friends, and others. Then we have an urge to fulfill this love and we gradually try to intensify it and focus it. We seek an intimate companion with whom we can share our ideas and ideals and with whom we can work for common happiness and common good. We think that by loving an individual intensely and completely and having him as the partner of our journey through human life we shall have happiness and satisfaction. This is what is commonly known as falling in love. It is needless to say that most people do not really understand the full implication of falling in love; but it is indeed a great event in the life of a young person. He thinks that when two people are united in love there is great joy and satisfaction in life. Herein lies the value of marriage.

The question arises here: Can a person have the satisfaction of love without marrying? Is marriage essential for the culmination of love? Some thinkers maintain that it is essential. They feel that people cannot have intense love without it. We are not referring to physical extra-marital relationships but we are concerned about the life of monks and nuns and others who are devoted to the love of God. A book by our friend, Professor Peter A. Bertocci, expresses the idea that without marriage one cannot have the fulfillment of love.[2] We are sure he did not consider the lives of spiritual persons, such as the monks and nuns and some of the great creative artists and thinkers, but thought only in terms of the extra-marital physical relationships

[1] Matt. 10: 39.

[2] Peter A. Bertocci, *The Human Adventure in Sex, Love, and Marriage* (New York: Association Press, 1949).

between man and woman. We agree with him that extra-marital physical relationship is a barrier for the culmination of real love. However, it is worth while for us to give attention to the fact that a man can reach the culmination of love without marriage, if he directs this greatest urge of the human mind to God, directly and immediately, without any physical expression. A monk or nun deliberately and consciously directs his or her love to God and finds fulfillment in union with Him. The devotee forgets himself and merges himself in God. As Girish Ghosh, the great dramatist of India, writes: "I lost myself in Him." So the monk or nun loses himself or herself in the love of God and finds intense emotional satisfaction in it. This form of love cannot be compared to anything on the human plane. It is all-consuming, universal, illimitable. It expands a person in such a way that he feels kinship not only with God but also with other beings. That is the reason a St. Francis and a Swami Vivekananda could love all beings intensely. They found that all beings were united and inseparably connected with their Beloved. Indeed, this is the culmination of the third form of love. It is the greatest satisfaction that any human being can have. It is the goal of householders as well as of those in monasteries and convents.

Marriage is essential for most people, as it is in itself a training process in human emotions. Marriage is important for the cultivation of human love and for the harmonious development of other emotions, but it is a mistake to say that a man cannot love God without going through marriage. Monks and nuns, however, are few in this world; they form a microscopic minority. So the vast majority of the people must experience love through the medium of marriage.

Marriage is a sacrament, to use Christian terminology, which enables two persons to discipline their emotions together and to harmonize the differences in their emotions, understanding, aspirations, and achievements in life. It enables them not only to have emotional satisfaction but also to sacrifice their likes and dislikes for the common good and for the good of their children. The experience of marriage is an important process in the expansion of the emotions as well as of love and of social consciousness. It has been found that a civilization deteriorates when it loses the sanctity of married life. Professor J. D. Unwin,

of Oxford and Cambridge, comes to the conclusion in *Sex and Culture* that when the people of a civilization indulge in sexual promiscuity, disregarding the sanctity of marriage, invariably there is deterioration.[8] Our own observations convince us of the validity of Professor Unwin's statements. Marriage is a disciplinary process which is necessary for the stability of emotions in the vast majority of the people. There are a few persons who can find satisfaction in human love without marriage and without extra-marital physical relationships. Their love is also intense and at the same time platonic. But every form of human love must be related to love of God if it is to be truly satisfactory.

When the ideal of marriage is considered, we find that it is an important factor in human life, not only for social reasons but also for emotional satisfaction. When two persons are intensely in love with one another, they want to be wholly united—physically, intellectually, emotionally, and above all spiritually because the urge of love is essentially a spiritual quality. If we withdraw the spiritual element from marriage, it is not going to be successful from the standpoint of the ideal which is the basis of marriage. As the goal of human life is the attainment of divinity that is already in man, or the attainment of God-consciousness, marriage helps the vast majority of people to work toward that goal through the fulfillment of the duties and functions of married life. This sacred institution leads one gradually from the human to the divine plane. But if any institution, method, or way of life deprives us of the primary objective of life, then our progress will be hindered. If the institution is withdrawn from society, as it has happened in different cultures, then society is bound to disintegrate.

Many young persons do not actually realize the seriousness of this sacred institution. The result of this has been disastrous. If anyone considers that marriage is a purely physical relationship and disregards the ideal behind it, then he is bound to fail in the attainment of the real goal of marriage. A minister reported to us some time ago how lightly many young people take this institution. He said that a young man went to him with a girl he wanted to marry. The expression that the young man used was extremely shocking. "I want to be hitched to this skirt."

[8] J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1934).

A prominent Episcopal minister recently told his congregation, at the thirtieth anniversary of his ministry, that at the time he was ordained almost every thirtieth marriage was unsuccessful. Now, after thirty years, every third marriage is a failure. We can cite instances from our own experience. A young man recently discussed his marriage problem with us. After he had been married about a month he and his wife were divorced. After a few months they got together again and remarried. After living together for a few more months they separated. When the young man asked for advice we told him that this experiment in marriage was hasty. Two grownups from different backgrounds cannot know each other sufficiently in one month to determine if they can adjust to each other. In fact, it was our conviction that they did not have a sound understanding of the marriage vow. The marriage was based on physical fascination. Our advice was that in the first place they should understand the significance of marriage and give themselves sufficient time to find out if they were compatible or not.

It is worth while to consider the Hindu conception of marriage. The implication in the term used to denote a Hindu wife is self-evident. She is called *sahadharmini,* the partner in spiritual culture. Marriage is considered as a union of two persons for mutual understanding, emotional satisfaction, and fulfillment of the common ideal of life. The Judaeo-Christian tradition has a similar conception of the sacredness of marriage. The man and wife are co-workers in the unfoldment of spiritual life. The goal of life, whether for man or woman, as we have expressed many times, is the unfoldment of the spirit within us, either through the marriage of two individuals who love one another and dedicate themselves to their mutual happiness, understanding, and spiritual development, or through monasticism. The goal of life is the ultimate manifestation of the divinity that is already in man, as we have quoted from Swami Vivekananda. We are consciously or unconsciously, deliberately or unintentionally, directly or indirectly, approaching the goal, because our inner urge is compelling us to reach that final aim—the realization of God.

In married life two persons who love each other intensely are fulfilling some purpose. Man functions on the physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual planes. The majority of people can-

not function on the spiritual plane all at once. They have to go through the different phases of life and harmonize them. It is a mistake to say that marriage is meant for physical satisfaction alone. There are many persons who understand marriage primarily in terms of physical gratification. A number of books have been written to justify this conception. The Kinsey report[4] is one of the outstanding presentations of this conception of the human functions. It is true that a group of investigators has certain facts, but the implicit generalizations are not justifiable.

We grant that the physical element exists in married life, but even this is not satisfactory unless there is intense love between man and wife. Many persons do not realize the cause of marital disturbances. One of the important causes is the lack of understanding of two distinct natures—masculine and feminine. It is true that man craves love, yet the feminine nature is more inherently emotional. It will not be out of place to say that much of the intellectual understanding of women is based on their emotional reactions and interpretation. It is commonly understood that women have "hunches," or an intuitive sense of certain things. This method of knowledge is of the emotional type in the majority of women. Most men do not actually understand feminine requirements so they create certain physical situations which become the basis for feminine tension, disturbance, and dissatisfaction on the physical plane, as their physical satisfaction is closely tied up with their emotional life. It is needless to say that many marital disturbances can be eliminated if both parties understand the mutual requirements. However, both are often selfish and thoughtless and do not consider each other's emotional needs.

We can cite many instances of failure in this sacred union due to the carelessness and thoughtlessness of the husband. A lady married a great intellectual who already had a previous failure in marriage. Even in his first marriage he did not fully realize the feminine requirements, so he was not at all thoughtful of the emotional element in the physical satisfaction of his second wife. In various ways he would hurt the emotions of this partner. Gradually this carelessness, thoughtlessness, and selfish-

[4] Alfred C. Kinsey, Mardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1948).

ness on his part completely alienated the affection of his wife. They both gradually developed a mental attitude which necessitated a divorce. Fortunately, the lady understood the higher values of life and directed her mind considerably to the ultimate goal of life, even though she went through this agonizing experience. On the other hand, we know another couple who had a similar type of problem and, after about twenty years, that marriage, also, ended in divorce. Unfortunately, the lady would not absorb the higher spiritual values, so she is living a life of complete isolation and frustration.

Married couples should keep in mind that their success in life will depend on mutual understanding, love, and cooperation, even on the physical plane. Many persons do not realize the value of cooperation and harmony in their intimate life. It is worth while for both the partners to keep this idea of cooperation bright in their minds through the medium of their marriage, if they want to reach the goal.

An important element in marriage is procreation. Marriage is not generally satisfactory if it is not blessed with children. Often, people do not realize this particular feminine requirement. After all, woman is the mother, as Swami Vivekananda points out in his "Women of India." Women consciously or unconsciously are seeking motherhood. The mother sentiment is present even in four- or five-year old girls, not to speak of adults. We find that if a woman is not married or if she is without a child after marriage she spontaneously expresses the mother instinct and wants to fulfill it in other ways.

Motherhood is also the spiritual quality of womanhood. Some may question this and say that it is a mere biological urge to preserve the race. However, we find that it also has a spiritual and cultural value. Culture is transmitted from parents to children, from teachers to students and disciples. It will not be out of place to say that this relationship between parents and children can be equated with that of the spiritual teachers and disciples in India. The parents consciously and unconsciously connect themselves with previous and successive generations and become the links through which the culture is passed on to their children. So the parents play an essential part in the structure of society. An important emotional element in the propagation of

children is the satisfaction of seeing them grow into manhood and womanhood and become links themselves through which the cultural heritage is passed on. Apart from this value, there is also the deeper spiritual element to be considered, for through this process the married couple is gradually approaching the supreme goal of life.

In the Hindu social system there are four stages of life called *ashramas*. (1) A young man or woman enters life as a student. He not only learns from books and gains an intellectual conception of philosophy, history, and other such subjects, but he is also trained emotionally and practically in interpersonal relationships. He must understand the duties that are prescribed for the life of a householder. First is his duty to God. It is the primary duty of every person to love or know God. The second duty is to follow the teachings of the great religious leaders, the spiritual teachers, who build up cultures and civilizations. What would have been the condition of Europe but for the influence of Jesus and His followers? What would have happened in India but for the influence of great spiritual personalities like Krishna, Buddha, and others? What would have become of the Jews if they had not had the great prophets? What would have become of China but for the influence of Lao-tse, Confucius, and others? A person must be grateful to these spiritual personalities for his cultural heritage. He fulfills his duty to them by living according to their principles and by transmitting the ideals received from them to his children and others, thereby preserving the highest values of a culture.

The third duty is to the parents and grandparents. But for them an individual would not exist nor would he have intellectual, emotional, and spiritual achievements. This responsibility is fulfilled in the performance of the first duty. The fourth duty of a man is to his fellow beings. His life and welfare depend on them. Heat, light, food, shelter, and other comforts and necessities are produced by the labor of innumerable persons. Therefore, if a person does nothing in return and only takes everything from them, he is neglecting his social duty. Indeed, every man must have social consciousness. The fifth and final duty is to inferior beings such as animals, birds, and so forth, for they also are potentially divine. By virtue of his birth, a person

is obligated to fulfill these duties during all the stages of his life.

(2) When this training period is over, the individual enters married life. Then the married couple observes the five duties and serves society. The man and wife take care of the parents, each other, their children, relatives, and other members of society. (3) When they are older and have brought up their families, they enter the third stage of life which is predominantly contemplative. This is a period of preparation for a still higher stage. The husband and wife remain together but they retire from the family life and give their time to intense spiritual practices, acting in the capacity of advisors and friends to their children and grandchildren. (4) In the last stage of life the individuals give their entire time to the service of God and man through intense spiritual practices. This is generally associated with a life of renunciation.

A proper understanding of these stages is important in marriage. How much middle-aged men and women suffer from the wrong understanding of their function in married life! They seem to think that they must continue to function on the physical plane throughout life. The result is inevitable frustration, tension, and conflict. The body and mind change with age. If anyone wants to continue to function on the physical plane even in later years he is bound to have serious difficulties, for cruel nature plays havoc with him. Man exists not only for biological satisfaction but for something higher. He can have satisfaction throughout life if he also functions on the intellectual, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual planes. Marriage is bound to fail if couples do not realize the real values of life and marriage. Herein lies the utility of the higher aspect of religion.

Although we have discussed religion in previous chapters, we are going to elaborate its meaning for married life. If a person keeps the supreme goal bright in life and subordinates all the other functions to that ideal, then there is definite justification and reason to be happy in marriage. On the other hand, if he discards the religious value in marriage and takes it merely as the fulfillment of physical satisfaction, there will be inevitable frustration. For example, there was an important professional man with a great deal of inherited wealth who was married for

more than twenty-five years. He and his wife had normal children. As he approached the age of sixty, he began to realize that his physical appetite was not being satisfied and he started to seek new channels of satisfaction. He tried to justify himself by criticizing his wife, but the criticism was on weak grounds. The real basis of the matrimonial trouble was a lack of higher aspirations and the practice of higher values. The life of the couple became unbearable. The wife sought spiritual assistance and helped herself considerably. The husband continued to be disturbed for some time, but due to the nobility of his wife he began gradually to submit to the inevitable conditions of life. However, the agony of the man cannot be fully described. He would have eliminated this disturbance entirely and led a sweet life with his wife if he could have persuaded himself to devote time to intellectual and spiritual values. Many persons, both men and women, are dissatisfied with life and act violently because of frustration, and the inner tension caused by wrong and immature insight into values. Even though they are grownup they function like children, clinging to the old objects of enjoyment. If they could have mature insight that their physical nature is bound to change and, therefore, give emphasis to higher values, they would have a peaceful and happy middle age and old age.

Even intellectual and aesthetic pursuits cannot satisfy a person fully all through life. They are, no doubt, better than mere physical functioning, but we know some people of middle age who give their time to intellectual and aesthetic culture which does not sustain them. There is no emotional satisfaction unless a person has God in his life. There is no need to be ashamed of the word God. He may be called God, Allah, Jehovah, Absolute, or whatever a person prefers; but whatever He may be called, a person must have that Reality in his life. The reason is that two persons coming from different backgrounds, traditions, and families will find it difficult to harmonize and integrate themselves into the marital union unless they understand that there is a higher reality in both of them. They should gradually reach the third point, God, who is the central figure of both. If two persons realize that they are inseparably connected with each other because of their relationship to God, this becomes the common basis for their union. Expediency does not help

for any length of time. They may think that they must work together because otherwise their married life will not be happy, but they need a still higher value to have deeper understanding, sympathy, and acceptance of one another's tendencies, possibilities, achievements, and emotional and intellectual requirements. As we think of married life, we cannot help but conclude that the basis of all the requirements of marriage lies in the understanding of the partner's higher nature. The question may arise: Why should not an individual seek personal gratification, even at the cost of the partner? But when the man and wife understand that they are interrelated with God, just as the rays of the sun are related to one another and to the sun, they will harmonize and give up their angularities for the common good, for mutual happiness, and for God-realization. They can thereby reach the third form of love.

Another factor should be remembered in order to make marriage successful. Although men and women are inseparably connected with God, on the physical plane they function differently as individuals. Men have certain types of expressions and functions and women another. By no means is one sex inferior to the other. On the contrary, they are complementary. The masculine and feminine functions in life complete the totality of human experience. If one or the other feels self-sufficiency and disregards or subordinates the importance of the other, then there will be incomplete functioning of human life creating serious consequences. Many major problems arise in married life when either party fails to realize the significance of the respective duties and functions of the other. Due to the lack of understanding of proper values and each other's complementary nature, certain mental disturbances can be created in the form of superiority or inferiority complexes, apart from the disharmony caused in total married life.

Clinical psychologists often face this problem. A particular case comes to mind in this connection. A man lost his father early in life and was brought up by his mother without any masculine influence. He naturally began to imitate the feminine nature. When he was married to a young woman, his feminine tendencies created a serious conflict both in him and in his wife which ultimately destroyed this sacred relationship. We also know many instances where the woman has become extremely aggressive and

masculine in her marital affairs. This trait may have developed because of her admiration of her father or because of childhood negligence and insecurity resulting in a feeling of inferiority. When a woman adopts the masculine way of life, she invariably neglects her proper functioning and duty in marriage. This imitation of the masculine quality by a feminine nature is disastrous and creates conflicts in both partners.

We know many women in the present social structure who like to imitate men in their personal behavior and relationships. They do not seem to realize that their role in family life is as important as that of the men. We cannot blame women for that, as in a patriarchal society man plays an important part. The importance of the woman's place is ignored, so much so that she is made to feel inferior. On the other hand, in a matriarchal society, woman plays the most important part, keeping the man in a subordinate state. In both these distinct types of society, one or the other suffers from a sense of inferiority, thus creating serious disturbances in both partners, directly or indirectly. However, in a stable society, they are both equally important, even though there is a difference in their respective functions and duties.

A man should realize that his wife is basically divine, just as the wife should realize that her husband is also basically divine. In one of the Upanishads there is a celebrated story which is told in the conversation between two spiritual personalities, a man and wife renouncing the world. The wife wanted to share the treasure for which her husband was giving up the world. In the inspired conversation the husband, Yajnavalkya, tells the wife:

> "Oh, Maitreyi, the husband is not dear to the wife because of the husband but because of the love for the Atma (Self) in the husband. Similarly, the wife is not dear to the husband because of herself but because of the husband's love for the Atma in her. . . . So, Maitreyi, realize the Atma who is the dearest of all."[5]

When a person realizes the fact of the spiritual nature of man, he becomes convinced that the masculine and feminine functions are equally important; neither is inferior or superior to the other.

That is the reason that in ancient India there was harmony

[5] *Vrihadaranyakopanishad* II: 4.

in the family. The society was neither totally patriarchal nor totally matriarchal. It was based on mutual understanding and appreciation of the two aspects of human nature. In order to make marriage successful, a person must understand that these two functions are necessary for the common good and for the realization of the ultimate goal of life.

Another problem to consider is the implication of marriage in a society or a culture. From the Hindu point of view, marriage is not a mere personal affair; it is a social affair as well. Hindu marriage is greatly communistic, not in the Russian sense but in a spiritual sense. Two persons marry, live together, and function together on the physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual planes for their own happiness and for the good of society at large. That is the reason that in India a marriage is approved by society; the newly-weds are accepted as integral parts of the group. Naturally, society should have some voice in the marital union to determine that it is not only good for the pleasure of the young people but also for the whole social structure. Nowadays, young people all over the world are often individualistic and disregard their social responsibility. This individualistic and selfish attitude toward marriage, with disregard of its social implications, often seriously affects the union. It gradually makes the partners more and more egocentric and selfish. On the other hand, if the newly wed couples realize their social responsibility they will contribute to society, because they understand that society contributes a great deal to their welfare. Naturally, society should give its sanction and blessings to the young married couple. That can only happen when the religious ideal is kept bright. When such marriages take place, it can be taken for granted that they will be a blessing to the family, to society, to the community, and to the world, for true religion cultivates mutual thoughtfulness.

In order to remedy tension and frustration in marriage, the couple should have a thorough understanding of the required ethical discipline; otherwise, the marriage will be an inevitable failure, even though there may not be divorce. Apart from mutual physical satisfaction, there must be other satisfactions if the marriage is to contribute healthy and normal children to society and fulfill its social values. In our own experience and that of

many clinical psychologists, social welfare workers, and ministers of religion, it has been found that insecurity in children produces abnormalities and thereby creates a chaotic condition in society. In order to stabilize and harmonize the sacred union, both parties have to realize that they must impose discipline on themselves. This is not imposed on them by outsiders but is self-imposed self-control for the good and happiness of the man and wife as well as the children.

It is sometimes suggested that external ethical superimposition creates serious disturbances and maladjustment in the union. Outside influences often create difficulties. But if the couple use self-control instead of self-expression in case of conflict, bringing in their own religious values, their marriage will grow in mutual happiness and harmony and the gradual spiritual evolution of both husband and wife.

It is, no doubt, easy to understand the utility of ethical living but it is difficult to carry out, for any two individuals have distinct tendencies and emotional reactions. They also have individual likes and dislikes, and consequently, there are a great many chances for irritations and conflicts. Herein lies the real value of spiritual practices which bring out the inner power to carry out the ethical principles of endurance, forgiveness, tolerance, acceptance, and sympathy in the couple's personal problems and in their social situations. Besides, the ethical living enables them to evolve spiritually and to set noble examples to their children by harmonizing their own relationship.

Counselors, advisors, social workers, and psychotherapists who are interested in helping people to establish stability and happiness in marriage by the removal of mental conflict, tension, and frustration must clearly recognize that their work will be meaningless, even though they give temporary help, unless they thoroughly emphasize the ethical basis of marriage and make clear that it means self-imposed self-control rather than repression. When a mother gives up luxuries for the good of the children, she does it willingly and lovingly without being conscious of sacrifice. Similarly, a married couple should often be willing to give up their selfish desires and expressions and personal satisfactions for the good of each other and the children and for their own spiritual growth.

The married couple should not only work together in their household duties and personal functions but should also devote time to their spiritual practices together. It is an important factor for their mutual growth. When one or the other neglects spiritual practices while the other partner goes on evolving spiritually there is conflict and tension. The one who neglects the spiritual duties becomes dissatisfied. Often he or she becomes jealous of the other.

In one case a man became deeply interested in spiritual life. While his wife appreciated spiritual values, she neglected spiritual practices. She gradually began to feel lonely and dissatisfied, as she was not taking part in the total experience of her husband, even though they were working together in other aspects of family life. This dissatisfaction of the wife created serious conflict in the marital relationship. The result was about to be disastrous when a spiritual teacher came to know about the situation and tried to straighten it out by persuading the wife to go through similar religious discipline. As a consequence, he was able to establish considerable harmony in the life of these two persons.

In another case, the wife was becoming deeply interested in spiritual life and began to do her spiritual practices seriously, which produced a radical change in her life. Her husband was intellectually appreciative of his wife in the early part of this changed situation. However, as she began to make progress while he neglected his spiritual practices, he became considerably dissatisfied and jealous of his wife. Unfortunately, his mind went farther and farther away from religious life, in spite of his earlier intellectual appreciation and enthusiasm. The situation ended in marital disaster and divorce. A spiritual teacher tried in vain to persuade the husband to take up religious life. We are convinced that if the husband could have taken up spiritual practices along with the wife this unfortunate situation would not have arisen. Moreover, they would have been very happy in all the phases of life.

In many cases when two persons deeply appreciate religious values and practice spiritual exercises together they establish real harmony in their union. This togetherness should be practiced in the physical, intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual phases of life. It is important to note that the spirit of cooperation is

valuable in the lives of the children as well. The children are intuitive and intelligent in their evaluation of the life of the parents. Whenever they notice or sense lack of cooperation in the parents in any way they feel insecure. Children who are brought up in a family with no togetherness or cooperation develop many of the juvenile difficulties and even delinquency. It is important that parents discharge their duty to their children by developing the spirit of cooperation in all phases of their lives, for the sake of the children, for society at large, and above all for their own happiness and the ultimate realization of the common spiritual goal.

CHAPTER XIII

Religion and Integration

A MAN can be called a real man so long as he is struggling to overcome nature. Many people think of nature as that which is governed by physical laws; but nature is internal as well as external. Not only is it comprised of the laws that govern the particles of matter in the external world and in the human body but it also consists of the more subtle motive powers which control the internal world. It is wonderful to conquer external nature but it is still more wonderful to conquer internal nature. It is admirable to know the laws that govern the stars and planets; it is infinitely more admirable to know the laws that govern the passions, feelings, and will of mankind. This conquest of the inner man, the understanding of the subtle mechanisms within the human mind, and the knowledge of its remarkable secrets belong strictly and entirely to religion, or to the branch of psychology which deals with the total function of the human mind.

In every society there is a group of people whose pleasure is not in the senses but beyond them, who now and then catch glimpses of something higher than gross matter, and who struggle to reach it.[1] The rise of a nation comes with an increase in the number of such men, and the fall begins when this pursuit of the Infinite has ceased. The mainstream of every race lies in its spirituality. The death of that race begins when spirituality wavers and materialism and hedonism gain the ascendancy.

[1] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1911). See also James Bissett Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1945). Allport, *The Individual and His Religion*. Brightman, *Nature and Values*.

Everyone is concerned nowadays with the problems of man. Every individual is frightened about the future of civilization, the future of mankind. Fifty years ago, Swami Vivekananda said in his Indian lectures: "The whole of the Western world is on a volcano which may burst tomorrow, go to pieces tomorrow. They have searched every corner of the world and have found no respite."[2] Serious and thoughtful men are trying to find a solution for these threatening problems of the modern world. It is to be expected that they are frightened by the destructive use of scientific knowledge at present. They do not know how or when the other nations will begin to use the products of this knowledge. Scientists, philosophers, and religious leaders are making alarming statements about current conditions. Professor Northrop, in his interesting and inspiring book, *The Meeting of East and West,* is seeking a solution for the vexing problems of international life.[3] He also stresses how the East and West can get together and function for mutual good. Of late in his speeches he has been emphasizing means of establishing peace between the Anglo-Americans and the Russians. It is not necessary to elaborate the importance of these problems in international relations. However, we cannot have understanding between Anglo-Americans and Russians or between East and West without considering the deeper issues.

It is absurd to think that politicians and military leaders can handle the situation alone. In the first place, they do not understand the basic issues at all. They may say that they do, but their understanding is superficial. As Swami Vivekananda says, they are interested in the conquest of external nature. When they try to conquer it and use it for the pleasure of man they will create various types of problems and tension everywhere until they destroy themselves. Serious men feel that destruction may be very near. Are we, then, to be pessimistic and to think that it is all over? Our answer is no. Of course, we have justification to be alarmed, but there is also a solution for this frightening problem, if man wants to solve it.

[2] "Lectures from Columbo to Almora," *Works,* III, 277. See also Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age* and *The Reconstruction of Humanity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948).

[3] F. S. C. Northrop, *The Meeting of East and West* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946).

Apart from national and international problems, there is considerable personal trouble in the world. Man's mind is not integrated at present and there is serious mental conflict. Man finds it difficult to control and regulate his emotional and other mental urges. Just as he is facing difficulty in national and international situations, so he is finding even more vexing problems in his personal life. When we stop to think, we find that both external and internal conflicts have the same cause—the attempt to conquer external nature. Man has forgotten that he has to overcome his own internal nature. Consequently, he has created these vexing problems which threaten to destroy all the values of life. Emotional disruptions are frightening the people just as much as political, economic, or racial issues.

Let us consider how we can handle these problems. There are many persons advocating the integration of society. The Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion and other such groups are discussing this issue. Can scholarship help us to integrate society? Outstanding thinkers and scholars recommend education as a solution; they feel that strengthening of the intellect is needed. Many of them also feel strongly that the social sciences should be developed. Philosophers like Professor John Dewey think that scientific method can alone solve modern problems. According to him:

> It [the present state of philosophy] holds that not grasp of eternal and universal Reality but use of the methods and conclusions of our best knowledge, that called scientific, provides the means for conducting this search. It holds that limitations which now exist in this use are to be removed by means of extension of the ways of tested knowing that define science from physical and physiological matters to social and distinctly human affairs. The movement is called, in its various aspects, by the names of pragmatism, experimentalism, instrumentalism.[4]

The Professor also advises the philosophers to give up the pursuit of the Absolute and direct their attention to the development of the various phases of science. He seems to feel that science is still in its infancy; when it is thoroughly developed it will solve the problems of man. He writes:

> The accusation brought against it [philosophic inquiry] of childlike trust in science omits the fact that it holds that science itself is still in

[4] John Dewey, *Problems of Men* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), p. 11.

its babyhood. . . . It holds that it will achieve manhood only when its use is extended to cover all aspects of all matters of human concern.[5]

Little does he realize that the objective of various scientists is the conquest of the different aspects of external nature. Even the social sciences like sociology, social psychology, and anthropology do not go deep enough for man to learn how to conquer his inner nature. We cannot help thinking that the learned philosopher, along with other such thinkers, misses the mark. His prescriptions seem superficial in the light of the facts of contemporary history. As long as the social sciences remain as they are in their outlook and philosophy, personal and interpersonal problems will remain unsolved.

In the conquest of external nature a kind of sociology may be developed from the utilitarian point of view. Man is realizing that he cannot live without establishing some sort of integration in society. The question arises, then, how can the ideology of the Americans—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, freedom of private enterprise (based on the ideal of democracy)—be integrated?

Again, there is Russia in the process of becoming the greatest or second greatest power. In Russia they think that an ordinary man cannot understand what is good for him and has to be trained and guided by the leaders who know what is best for his welfare. This totalitarian attitude is the present ideal of Russian society. It is a mistake to think that totalitarianism appeared only recently in the world. According to Professor Northrop and a few others, it existed years ago in Europe, although it is not classified as such by many people. It was a paternalistic system where certain leaders told the people what to do so that they would have the greatest good in life. The idea was: "You are like children; you are not developed. We are responsible for your welfare; we shall see what is good for you. You obey us and that is enough." Russian totalitarianism is the same but with a different philosophy. Its philosophy is based on dialectical materialism, while the other system in Europe was based on religious ideals. There is a world of difference between these two types of totalitarianism. However, if the true religious ideal does

[5] *Ibid.*

not remain strong, then the religious system deteriorates into the same type of totalitarianism as exists in Russia today.

Totalitarianism as such is not to be blamed; it is the ideal which is at fault. Plato's Republic was to be guided by philosophers; but the Platonic philosophers were not like most of the philosophers today. They lived their philosophy, and as Platonists they believed that philosophy and life should not be isolated. In other words, the Platonic philosopher was he who had direct knowledge of the Reality, Truth, or Good. Unless he had the knowledge of the Reality, Truth, or Good, he was not a true philosopher. So he had to be a man of inner knowledge and conquest, established in truth. For Plato, to know is to act. Consequently, the behavior of the Platonic philosopher had to be changed and his personality wholly integrated.

Fortunately, there are outstanding philosophers who agree with Plato's point of view and do not agree with John Dewey's interpretation. They also understand and practice the philosophy they teach. Professor Edgar S. Brightman, for example, writes of the need for a sound philosophy of life:

> It is true that the present age is an age in which philosophy is in considerable disrepute. Nevertheless philosophy is indispensable for life. There are many who ridicule theory and passionately praise practice. One would like to see a person of that sort try to build a subway or a ship, or try to fly an airplane by practice without theory. We do, alas, see him daily living his life without any principles, and we see the triumph of practice over theory in loose living, loose drinking, and loose thinking. Meanwhile those who have a theory, be it good or bad, develop gigantic power. The power of Russia has rested on the philosophy of dialectical materialism; the power of Nazi Germany, on "the National Socialist world view"; that of the Roman Catholic Church, on the philosophy of St. Thomas and the principles of revelation as interpreted by Church Councils; and that of America and all democratic nations, on a democratic philosophy of life. Never was philosophy of life more powerful, and never have philosophies been more in need of rational criticism, than today. A philosophy of life is indispensable for great living, individual or social; and a truth-seeking philosophy is indispensable for true living.[6]

Ideas similar to Plato's were prescribed by ancient Hindu teachers. They also advocated a kind of republic which was to be inspired and governed by religious persons. This did not

[6] Brightman, *Nature and Values,* p. 141.

necessarily mean those who followed rituals and ceremonies or who were placed in exalted positions, but rather those who were completely integrated, who were thoroughly established in the knowledge of the Reality through conquest of their inner nature. Then and then alone were they fit to guide others.

Only when individuals have inner knowledge and integration can they become unselfish and look after the welfare of others. Otherwise their emotions are not integrated and their personalities are not yet unified. They can grow to the level of a true philosopher or a religious man, provided they try to conquer their inner nature. Unfortunately, we find in any given society that there are few persons who are interested in the conquest of inner nature and the integration of personality. So there will always remain only a handful of persons who will be able to act without any selfish motive or any desire for power or usurpation.

Those who are not established in the conquest of their inner nature will always move according to the dictates of their passions. They may talk of philosophy, religious ideals, equality, and brotherhood, but their behavior will reveal selfish motives. Thus not merely must the ideology be considered, but the ideal must be unified and established in the personality. If individuals cannot develop their personality and translate the ideal into action, then there cannot be a peaceful or harmonious society, regardless of whether the ideal is intellectual, philosophical, religious, or materialistic. This was shown during the Dark Ages and other periods of history in Europe and other parts of the world, and it is being shown again today all over the world.

Although we are now becoming more aware that we are living in one world, there is still considerable prejudice between different races and groups. Take, for instance, the United States. Christians and Jews have a moderate amount of knowledge of each other in this country. Does this knowledge remove prejudice and preconceived notions between the two groups? Unfortunately, it does not. The same ancient prejudice lingers in the minds of many Christians and Jews, and is seen in their behavior toward one another. They do not act with such open hostility here, however, as in some other countries. A friend of ours told us that in the large cities of Poland, not long ago, a Jew would spit where a Christian had passed him, as if something unclean

had gone by. The Christians would do the same. Even though the expressions are modified in America, the feelings and tension are present; and whenever an unfortunate situation arises there is strong prejudice.

Similarly, unfortunate and deplorable activities have been conducted in India by men who were intellectually great. They split the country and caused untold suffering for millions of people, not because they lacked the intellectual conception of higher ideals but because they were emotionally uncontrolled. Even when outstanding thinkers were trying to establish a world government and peace they aroused the masses to deplorable activities. Intellectualism does not necessarily go with integration of personality.

When the emotions or passions are aroused, man descends to the level of animals; he becomes worse than the animals. What was not done in Germany a few years ago and what has not been done in Japan and India? Recently, Paul Hutchinson, Managing Editor of the *Christian Century,* spoke frankly about conditions in Japan. Every American who knows about it must be ashamed of some of his fellow countrymen. Last year, two of our American friends related to us their experiences in India. They said: "We hated to admit that we were Americans over there. We were ashamed of the way the Americans behaved and the way they lowered themselves in Oriental countries." Should we conclude that those Americans were intellectually weak? Many of them were college boys or high school boys. They did not lack intelligence but they lacked emotional control. So they lowered the ideal of the Americans in the eyes of the Oriental countries. Wendell Willkie reported that American prestige is practically dead in the Orient. This is not due to a lack of intellectualism but rather to lack of emotional integration.

Although some might think that intellectualism would solve the conflict, unfortunately, intellectualists often cannot stand up under temptation. When their philosophy of life remains the attainment of the greatest amount of pleasure on the sense plane, they deteriorate, as the contemporary history of the West proves. Their intellectualism is used for destructive purposes in the name of national security. Scientists are devoting themselves to the service of the government. They have sacrificed everything

for the cause of the government. Nevertheless, there is a group of scientists in this country who oppose the use of scientific knowledge by political and military leaders and who refuse to divulge their scientific knowledge to those leaders, knowing that intellectualism should remain free from all influences. They are making a noble attempt; but, unfortunately, the attempt will remain limited to a small number. The rest will go with the crowd because of their misguided philosophy of life. They cannot be blamed, because they think that power in international growth, in sense enjoyment, is the supreme goal of life.

It is interesting to note what a great psychologist in America has to say about what he calls the master-sentiment and what we call the supreme goal of life. Professor Allport writes:

> Religion and therapy are alike in their insistence upon the need for greater unification and order in personality. Both recognize that the healthy mind requires an hierarchical organization of sentiments, ordinarily with one master-sentiment holding the dominant position. Psychotherapy does not insist that the strong central interest should be religious in character, although this possibility, as I have just said, is ordinarily recognized and respected. But from the point of view of psychotherapy sentiments dealing with family, art, sports, business, would be equally good if they succeeded in marshaling energy and bestowing order in life. Religion is bound to disagree at this point, asking whether such sentiments are adequate to sustain personality.[7]

It is religion that can save us today. The religious ideal can help us in personal and national integration and in the integration of society, because religion emphasizes the conquest of man's inner nature. Religion can be considered as such so long as it stresses control of the lower nature and manifestation of the higher nature of man. It is not religion if it does not hold to the supreme ideal of life. From time to time, even many so-called religious leaders have forgotten the religious ideal of life and have become degraded. Though they have called themselves religious, they have deteriorated into materialistic totalitarians for all practical purposes. How aptly Professor Allport says:

> Religion, we conclude, is superior to psychotherapy in the allowance it makes for the affiliative need in human nature. But when it comes to a question of implementing this insight we are confronted by the age-

[7] Allport, *The Individual and His Religion,* p. 79.

long failure of religion to turn doctrine into practice. More and more people seem impatient with the shortcomings of unacted religious profession. A host of accusations arise.[8]

The religious ideal, then, must be kept ablaze constantly if we want integration of ourselves and society and removal of the tension which has been created in the modern world; and the religious ideal can be kept ablaze only by the integration of personality. Although a whole nation or society is not at once lifted to a higher plane through inner conquest, it can be done on an individual basis and those individuals can influence others to do the same. That is the reason Swami Vivekananda says that the more the individuals can conquer their inner nature and manifest their higher or divine nature, the greater and more stable society will be.

When there are many integrated personalites in human society, civilization rises. Their influence is felt by the masses. Sri Krishna tells us in the *Bhagavad-Gita* that whatever a great man does will be done by the masses. If the greatness of a man is understood from a religious point of view—that he can conquer himself, love others, and serve the world—then we are bound to follow his ideal. It is high time for every thinking man to fortify himself by the ideal of self-conquest, if he wants to remove tension, individually and collectively. When the emotions and passions are conquered and directed by individuals to the highest realization of life, then those persons become centers of spiritual power which they can disseminate. Through this method alone can a harmonious society be established.

This conquest must be accomplished by practical means. Intellectually it may be understood, but a person cannot hold to it unless it is applied in everyday life. He becomes religious when he regulates his everyday life, when he does everything with the spirit of service and consecration, when he conquers his passions, integrates his personality, and manifests his divine nature. Then alone can he become a powerful personality and lift people to the higher plane. Then alone can the problem of tension be solved.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

CHAPTER XIV

Technique of Integration of Personality

THE technique of integration of personality lies in knowing how to handle the emotions properly and how to harmonize and unify the different functions of the total mind—emotion, intellect, and will. As discussed in the previous chapter, man begins his emotional life like an animal. But man becomes man when he rises from the animal plane to the divine plane through the stages of human development. When he transforms his lower passions and integrates his emotions and makes his life altruistic, then alone does he function on the divine plane. As Professor Edgar S. Brightman says: "Spirituality is a life of harmony, unity, and integration."[1]

In order to achieve transformation of personality, the first requisite is that an individual must have the desire to integrate his emotions. The growth of personality depends on the intensity of this desire. If the desire is strong and the person makes a strenuous effort for its fulfillment, he succeeds; if it is less intense and the effort less strenuous, his growth is affected accordingly. Another factor to be considered is that many people do not have sustained desire and effort; they are unsteady and lukewarm and, consequently, integration is retarded. Sometimes circumstances create a kind of craving for development; glorious living examples of personal integration also inspire many people. However, this is often temporary and they do not seem to make any real progress. They become unstable in their efforts. Those who are unsteady in their desire for integration of personality and are

[1] Edgar Sheffield Brightman, *The Spiritual Life* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942), p. 191.

temporarily motivated to attain it, through change in circumstances or casual ambition frequently have an emotional reaction. They lose all incentive for effort, feeling incapable of success. Often the basis for this reaction is lack of perseverance and tenacity rather than lack of capacity.

That is why some spiritual teachers feel it is useless to spend time with such persons in discussing methods and practices for spiritual life and emotional integration. On the other hand, there are some true lovers of mankind who are prepared to do everything for the unsteady persons who have temporary higher desires. They know that their love, sympathy, and living example will gradually stimulate and stabilize the desire of these erratic people. Sri Ramakrishna, the great spiritual leader of nineteenth-century India, used to say that a piece of wet fuel kept near the fireplace for some time will become dry and fit for use. So these spiritual teachers feel that if disorganized and distracted people can remain in their company, and if they are given genuine love, the personality of the erratic ones will be changed and they will become tenacious in their efforts to integrate their emotions. Herein lies the utility of guidance and dynamic sympathy in the relationship between the integrated teacher and the seeker of integration.

A case in point is A, who became interested in the religious ideal through association with the spiritual teacher. This individual lost interest, in the course of time, because of emotional attractions which turned his mind into other channels. Nevertheless, the teacher continued to shower love and sympathy on the student, with deep understanding of the instability of human emotion. This gradually influenced the student who eventually became stabilized. Another person, B, was also associated with the religious teacher and became interested in the higher ideal. When other emotional attractions pulled his mind away, this individual had the misfortune to lose personal contact with the teacher through circumstances which compelled a separation. B had been devoted previously to the ideal; but when the dynamic and sympathetic influence of the teacher was withdrawn the effect on B's emotions was disastrous.

There are a few methods of stabilizing the desire for emotional integration. The constant association with an integrated person-

ality, preferably a spiritual teacher, is important. This association stimulates a higher desire in the student and aspirant. We have seen many instances of radical transformation through such contacts. Again, there have been some individuals who, although they wished to develop themselves, lost their sustaining power of spiritual growth because they did not have the association of an integrated personality.

Two young men, C and D, had a mutual friend who persuaded them to go with him to visit a great spiritual person. Even though C was not so anxious to give up his old habits, he continued to go with his friend to see this great personality. As time went on, he went through a radical change and became emotionally integrated and spiritually inspired. On the other hand, D could not continue his association and as a result he lost all incentive to stabilize himself emotionally.

It is true that personalities of spiritual magnitude are not always to be found, so it is advisable for an individual to create the atmosphere himself through study of the teachings of the great religious leaders. In the course of time, this habit gradually inculcates a desire to change one's emotional structure and to evolve spiritually.

The second requirement for the integration of personality is that an individual must have a higher philosophy of life. Without this there is no possibility of integration. As we brought out in the last chapter aesthetic, intellectual, or national ideals may direct a person's emotions to one goal; yet these emotions may become destructive forces. Moreover, the hedonistic philosophy of life produces selfishness instead of unselfishness and gradually creates disintegration in the personality instead of unification. So again we suggest that the supreme goal of life should be regarded as the manifestation of the divine nature of man. This furnishes the real basis of self-control. By self-control we mean the control of disruptive emotions and the redirection of the so-called primitive urges (self-preservation, self-expression, sex pleasure, knowledge, and gregariousness) and the secondary emotions (greed, fear, envy, and so forth). It goes without saying that the personality cannot be integrated so long as man has tension within him, either because of the repression of any of these urges, lack of satisfaction, overstimulation of one or another of the

urges at the cost of harmony in the emotional structure in the mind, or because of the malfunctioning of the emotions.

So it is necessary that there be a certain amount of control of the primitive urges. Their harmonization and transformation is of vital importance for the integration of personality. Integration must be based on emotional stability and harmony; it cannot be accomplished by repression or unbridled and unregulated emotional satisfaction. That is the reason that a sound philosophy of life—that the human soul is potentially divine and we are the children of God and joint heirs with Christ, according to St. Paul—is absolutely essential for emotional stability. Unless this attitude is cultivated, there is no means for the control of the lower emotions. Control of the destructive emotions enables a person to fulfill the real purpose and supreme goal of life—the manifestation of divinity in man or love of God and neighbor. In fact, this is the rationale behind the desire for the integration of personality. Mere intellectual, philosophical, theological, or sociological understanding of the establishment of the brotherhood of man does not have sustaining power nor does it integrate the emotions. Many absolutist philosophers often lose their absolutism in actual life when their emotions are aroused. Theologians lose the conception of love of God and neighbor when national passions are stimulated.[2] Great scientists, as we have observed previously, may become subservient to the national cause and lose sight of higher ideals. Many religious groups also in the name of religion have not hesitated to express most inhuman and brutal tendencies at different times in history. Such evidence shows that something more than intellectual understanding of the ideal is necessary. How sound is the statement made by Professor Brightman in his *Nature and Values*:

> No philosophy which does not satisfy his whole mind will permanently satisfy man. Since Plato first saw this principle and used it as a pulverizing weapon against sexual sin, it has been a cornerstone of any sound philosophy of life. But what is sound is not always immediately effective. A tragic feature of human life is displayed in the violence with which man opposes his own permanent good in the interest of his temporary good, or supposed good. Passion and greed are blind

[2] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christianity and Power Politics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940). See also William Temple, *Mens Creatrix* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1917). Barth, *This Christian Cause.*

but intense; and they often sweep away the power of the truest and highest ideals as if they were no more than thin air.[3]

Professor Mowrer also declares: "Thus it is that we come to see that neurosis involves, basically, a learning deficit rather than a learning excess, but one which the individual is often unable to correct, spontaneously and unaided."[4]

In our experience we have known persons who were intellectually inspired by high ideals but who could not carry them out. One such individual is E who did not have a proper understanding of the higher philosophy of life, even though she was inspired by personal contacts with the teacher. Neither did she apply and practice the steps outlined below. Her family life was affected by her selfish attitude and arrogance; yet she did not try to overcome this attitude and she failed to integrate her personality. F was inspired intellectually by a higher ideal but he continued to suffer with functional diseases because he lacked emotional stability and did not follow the required steps. Another man, G, continued to have functional ailments and was extremely unpopular among his associates because he failed to integrate his emotions or to follow the other steps. He, too, had intellectual ideals but was unable to carry them out in his daily life.

So the third step—directing the emotions to God—is essential for emotional integration. Then a person can strike at the root of emotional disintegration and selfish urges. Human beings have various innate and spontaneous emotional expressions. Some naturally have the attitude of a child that loves his parents; others naturally feel and express conjugal love; again there are some who have parental love for children; while another group likes the comradeship of friends. Those who have a predominantly emotional type of mind should be helped to establish one of these relationships with God, as it is easier for them to use their natural tendencies for this. They should think of God as their child, friend, mother, father, or beloved, and then express their emotions to Him through one of these relationships. In their devotional practices they should try to remember this relationship and accordingly act as if God were present in that particular

[3] Brightman, *Nature and Values*, pp. 141-142.

[4] O. H. Mowrer, "Learning Theory and the Neurotic Paradox," *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, XVIII, No. 4 (October, 1948), 609.

form to receive their affectionate treatment and offering. This very habit of doing something for God as their own friend, child, and so forth, will gradually intensify their feeling toward Him and consequently will unify all their other emotions. Even in their human relationships and interpersonal behavior they should try to remember the presence of God in those whom they love.[5] Through the cultivation of these inner faculties, one can gradually unify the emotions.

The saintly characters among the Christians, Hindus, Jews, and others have demonstrated that integration of personality can be accomplished through proper handling of the emotions and directing them to God. St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Teresa of Avila, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux (The Little Flower), were great examples in the Christian tradition. The devotees of Brindaban, Mirabai, and Tulsidas of India, and many of the great disciples of Sri Ramakrishna of modern India, illustrate this point. Similar instances can be found in the tradition of other religions.

In the fourth step an individual must struggle in every action to express the consciousness of his divine nature. He must also try to see the presence of God in others. The moment the lower passions arise—either because of the weakness, disharmony, or destructive activities of others—that very moment he must try to see God in them and thereby overcome his passions. Anger cannot be conquered by anger and hatred cannot be conquered by hatred; it is love that conquers hatred, as Buddha declared.[6] The more a person expresses anger and hatred the more these tendencies possess him. In other words, he intensifies those lower tendencies through their expression. Really and truly a man is the victim of his passion. According to Hindu psychologists, emotions can be more effectively controlled before they are expressed, when they are still in an incipient state. The founder of Indian psychology, Patanjali, says that the *samskaras* (the impressions or unconscious contents of the mind) must be controlled and transformed. According to him: "Their control is by practice and non-attachment."[7] In his *Raja Yoga,* Swami Vivekananda equally

[5] "Bhakti Yoga," *Works,* III. Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu View of Christ* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), pp. 123 ff.; and *Hindu Psychology,* pp. 179 ff.

[6] *Dhammapada,* trans. Max Müller, I: 5.

[7] *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* I: 12.

stresses the control of these unconscious impressions so that they can be transformed from destructive to creative forces. He says:

> . . . When a large number of these impressions is left on the mind they coalesce, and become a habit. It is said, "habit is second nature"; it is first nature also, and the whole nature of man; everything that we are is the result of habit. That gives us consolation, because, it is only habit, we can make and unmake it at any time. The Samskaras are left by these vibrations passing out of our mind, each one of them leaving its result. Our character is the sum total of these marks, and according as some particular wave prevails one takes that tone. If good prevails one becomes good, if wickedness, one becomes wicked, if joyfulness, one becomes happy. The only remedy for bad habits is counter habits; all the bad habits that have left their impressions are to be controlled by good habits. Go on doing good, thinking holy thoughts, continuously; that is the only way to suppress base impressions. Never say any man is hopeless, because he only represents a character, a bundle of habits, which can be checked by new and better ones. Character is repeated habits, and repeated habits alone can reform character.[8]

The fifth step is the cultivation of feelings opposite to anger, hatred, and other disintegrating urges. The deliberate cultivation of higher qualities quiets the mind and gradually integrates the emotions.[9] The more one expresses his higher emotions and altruistic tendencies, the more he overcomes the opposite tendencies. Thereby he creates new unconscious contents in the mind.

This is what we call the formation of character. Hindu psychologists are most emphatic on the deliberate cultivation of higher tendencies, even for the so-called destructive and disintegrated personalities. It has been found through experience that this not only integrates those who are controlling and redirecting their emotions but it also has a good effect on the persons to whom the emotions are expressed. The teachings of the Sermon on the Mount and the *Dhammapada* of Buddhistic tradition support our conviction. Sri Ramakrishna used to urge his followers to direct their emotions into higher channels. "Therefore one should direct them to God. If you must have desire and greed, then you should desire love of God and be greedy to attain him."[10] It should be noted here that rather than repressing the emotions, this method enables one to control, regulate, and

[8] *Works,* I, 207-208.
[9] *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* I: 33.
[10] *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* trans. Swami Nikhilananda, p. 428.

gradually to transform them. It goes beyond what some of the Western psychologists call sublimation. Moreover, it creates emotional satisfaction while a person is still struggling for the attainment of the goal.

The next step is the practice of concentration. The constant thought of God brings out all the latent powers of mind and thereby enables a person to carry out the spiritual philosophy of life in everyday activities. His will power is developed by this practice. Without will power he cannot apply his ideals in his activities. It stands to reason that when any kind of force is scattered it loses its vigor. On the other hand, when it is concentrated it becomes extremely powerful. Usually mental forces are scattered in various emotional urges, interests, and activities. The practice of concentration unifies them so that all the latent powers are manifested. Then a person can see God in himself and others and his attitude is changed in his interpersonal relationships. A man of integration whose will is unified never submits to lower passions. On the contrary, he becomes a center of love and attraction.

When the integration of personality is accomplished through the application of the six steps—desire for integration, acceptance of a higher philosophy of life, direction of the emotions to God, expression of inner divinity, cultivation of higher tendencies, and the practice of concentration—the person becomes established in the idea. He is then a true altruist and can influence others to change their lives. For instance, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Ramakrishna, and other great spiritual personalities changed people by their dynamic influence. Others like St. Paul and Swami Vivekananda also transformed many individuals. We have personally observed that even lesser personalities influence others if they have dynamic love and sympathy.

We have seen how disturbed and disintegrated persons were completely changed by outstanding spiritual personalities through the dynamic influence of sympathy and love. About forty years ago in India a man joined the Ramakrishna Order and went to live in the monastery near Calcutta. His brother, who was addicted to intoxicants and other undesirable habits, wanted to take him away. He went to the monastery in an intoxicated and angry condition one day for this purpose. He was met by Swami

Premananda, a great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. It was a hot day, so the Swami sent for water and food for the man and fanned him, talking gently and kindly to him. After a while, the man became calm and decided to leave. As he was going, the Swami said: "Come again!" Although the man was drunk, those magnetic words made a deep impression on his mind. He had never experienced such love. The very next day he returned to the monastery, intoxicated as ever. But Swami Premananda greeted him affectionately and gave him more refreshments, talking gently with him all the while. As the man prepared to take his leave, the Swami repeated the words: "Come again!" The man returned to the monastery many times, for he could not resist that love. In a short while he gave up his unfortunate habits and asked if he might be allowed to remain in the monastery. He eventually joined the Order and did wonderful work for suffering humanity. He was changed into an altruist by the love and sympathy of Swami Premananda. Similar incidents can be noted from the lives of Swami Brahmananda and others whom we knew intimately. Other religions also record such incidents.

Love and sympathy are the most dynamic forces for changing the personalities of others. An illustration of this is seen in the life of a woman to whom we shall refer as H. She came to us in an erratic and disorganized condition when she was young. Her home life was seriously disrupted by conflict between her parents which ended in divorce. She did not have any real emotional satisfactions nor did she have any sense of security in the home. Her father remarried but the mother remained single. Unfortunately, neither of the parents seemed to be a stabilizing influence in the girl's life. The only way she could get emotional satisfaction was to seek happiness outside. She had no stability of life in this, as she could not definitely form a goal to be achieved. Her only interest was to engage herself in social functions and entertainment. Consequently, her whole future was threatened by inevitable frustration and consequent neurosis. When she came to us we tried gradually to convince her of the higher spiritual values of life and to show her that life was not meant for mere sense enjoyments and social functions, since these would sooner or later lose their attraction. She would need moral, intellectual, and spiritual values in order to sustain

herself. She was given a definite scheme of life so that she could gradually find satisfaction in intellectual, moral, and spiritual functions. She used to visit her teacher at least twice a week. She also took up spiritual practices of concentration, meditation, and repetition of the name of God. Gradually, she unified her will power so that she could live according to her new attitude. Constant sympathetic and loving encouragement was given to her so that her emotions gradually became stabilized. She had the desire to integrate her personality and she understood the higher philosophy of life, so with guidance she followed all the steps to the best of her ability. Redirection of her emotions to God transformed her personality; her life was thoroughly reorganized; and her activities became creative and constructive.

Another young woman was considerably disorganized due to a serious conflict between herself and her mother. The mother was an aggressive and domineering person. The girl was also self-expressive in her early adolescence. Naturally, there was serious conflict between them. The girl felt frustrated and thwarted by the mother's domination. Consequently, she sought satisfaction, self-expression, and security through other channels. The result was disastrous. The personality of the girl was seriously affected. Fortunately, in an almost unexpected way she developed a desire for integrated religious life. However, she needed considerable encouragement to sustain this temporary higher aspiration. She was given the higher values of life and was asked to do her daily duties in the spirit of service and consecration. She was also told that her real self-expression would be attained only when she could consecrate her activities, even her livelihood, and do everything in the spirit of service. She was not told to crush her expression. On the contrary, she was requested to direct it through intellectual pursuits, higher growth in everyday life, and through spiritual realization. She was also given systematic spiritual practices of concentration and meditation and other devotional exercises. She was encouraged to study the books which would sustain her desire for spiritual growth. She formerly came to see us frequently. Patience and loving understanding on the part of the teacher inspired her to go ahead with her spiritual practices in spite of her conflicts and unsteadiness. Old habits and unconscious urges persisted for some time, but the new inter-

pretation of life and spiritual practices strengthened by encouragement and sympathetic understanding enabled her to change the course of her life.

A young man came to us about fifteen years ago. He had a mistaken idea that religious service meant giving up his usual employment and taking up social service work. He was frustrated because he wanted to marry and settle down in life, but the type of work he was doing did not enable him to maintain even himself. Had he married then, he and his family would have become a burden to society. Fortunately, he listened to our advice which was to qualify himself for greater achievement in life. He was also told that daily duties can be converted into worship. There was no reason to think that business and household duties were necessarily secular. He was given an understanding of the relative values of life in relation to the supreme goal of religious achievement. He was also given systematic spiritual practices. According to our advice he began to practice meditation on a particular aspect of God that was suited to his temperament. He also practiced certain forms of prayer and repetition of the name of God and he spent time in daily scriptural study.[11] He was tenacious and enthusiastic in his understanding of the new ways of life and in his religious exercises. He went ahead and qualified himself for a secular position in life. His frustration vanished and he is now doing something worth while.

Many of the self-expressive and egocentric modern aspirants dislike to be told that they need to change the course of their lives or that they need to go through necessary technical training of the mind or that certain kinds of activities and achievements are harmful for them. They often try to find excuses to go their own way, even though they want help and support from the teacher. They even try to get the sanction of the teacher for their activities. In many cases, a spiritual teacher should be wise enough not to allow the students to feel that their ego is to be crushed. Otherwise, the purpose of spiritual guidance will be wholly defeated in certain sections of modern society. If the teacher can pursue the tactful method of guidance with a great

[11] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology*, chap. VII, "Effect of Meditation."

deal of sympathy and love, and without letting the student feel that the teacher is interfering, he can accomplish much in the long run in stimulating a desire for integration of personality on the part of the student.

We have often noticed how tactfully Swami Brahmananda, our great master, would handle some individuals. He often would say that a certain type of person would only accept tactful hints for their own good. How true this statement was has been verified by our later experiences. There was a teacher who was harsh and tactless to some of his students, even though he thought only of their welfare. The effect was disappointing. In fact, he actually defeated his purpose with some of his students. As we go through the experiences of spiritual instruction, we fully realize how far-sighted Swami Brahmananda was in his handling of human personalities who seemed to be interested in the integration of their lives. Time and again his tact and unlimited love and patience gradually changed them. The spiritual teacher who really wants to further the welfare of his students and the therapist who really wants to help his patients and clients will remember this important point. Otherwise, they will actually defeat their own purpose. This is not what Carl Rogers calls non-directive counseling. Our method is based on the teacher's deep spiritual understanding of the student and on his love for him. We admit that this type of treatment requires time. But no human integration is possible without the need for time.

Freud and his followers advocate "transference" in order to do therapeutic work. This means that the patient consciously or unconsciously must establish a relationship with the therapist, in order for the psychotherapy to be effective. Freudian transference has some value in this connection, but psychotherapists should realize that the basis of transformation ought to be at least sympathy. Their influence could become more effective if they themselves would try to integrate their personality. It is true that they go through psychoanalysis. However, psychoanalysis cannot and does not properly integrate a person, no matter how helpful it may be in the treatment of disorganized persons. Individuals also need definite mental training, as we have suggested in the various steps. Only when the psychotherapists are integrated and have sympathy and love for their patients can they

become dynamic forces in the process of integration. Any person who wants to help disintegrated or unstable individuals must have deep sympathy and love. Only then is he able to inspire the people to adopt and apply a higher ideal in life.

We are a little concerned by the emphasis of Dr. Robert W. White on the technique of non-directive counseling, standard psychoanalysis, and brief psychoanalysis.[12] It seems to us that the greatest emphasis should be given to the development of personality and not merely to the techinique of training psychologists or counselors. Mere technical knowledge of the method does not help the client or patient to reconstruct his personality, but we appreciate the points Dr. White brings out. They are worth the consideration of every psychotherapist and religious counselor. He writes:

> There are four important aspects of the therapeutic situation. (a) The therapist is *expert*, in the sense that he possesses special training, experience, and knowledge about maladjusted and disordered behavior. (b) The therapist is *permissive*, in the sense that he serves only the interests of health and makes no censorious judgments upon the patient's acts or feelings. (c) the therapist is *interested and friendly*, communicating in this way a certain warmth that makes the relationship more personal than is ordinarily the case in a professional consultation. (d) The therapist is a *source of encouragement*. . . . the effect of his presence is to increase courage.[13]

It is gratifying to note what an outstanding psychiatrist, Dr. David G. Wright, has to say about the qualifications of a psychotherapist. He has had a great deal of therapeutic and administrative experience. According to him:

> Unfaltering follow-through of treatment efforts, no matter what the difficulty is, and no matter what the time consumed, is necessary. To do this, capacity for, and training towards, self-understanding and unwavering determination to aim for the completion of the patient's personality redevelopment, and never for anything less, is required.[14]

[12] White, *The Abnormal Personality*, pp. 319-347. Copyright 1948 by The Ronald Press Company.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 345-346.

[14] David G. Wright, "Some Psychiatric Considerations in the Schizophrenias." (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the New England Society of Psychiatry, April 20, 1950, at the Institute of Living, Hartford, Connecticut.) [Dr. Wright is Superintendent of Butler Hospital, Providence, Rhode Island.]

He goes on to say: "In connection with the qualifications of therapists, the first phase of therapy is that of making and maintaining contact; of becoming a meaningful part of the patient's world."[15] Dr. Wright does not express this view merely from an intellectual standpoint but also out of the depth of his own experience in the treatment of patients. He deserves a great deal of appreciation for the fact that he continued regular treatment of his patients at one time in spite of a serious illness of his wife. Such adamantine tenacity and sense of responsibility and feeling for the patients is needed in a counselor, therapist, and religious leader.

On the other hand, the emphasis on technical knowledge of counseling and other types of psychotherapy is often discouraging. To illustrate this we present one incident. A minister who took up the technique of counseling used to call on an elderly man. The man was isolated and depressed as he had no one to visit with him, so the religious leader used to smile and talk with him. After a while, the old man became encouraged and he used to look forward to the weekly visits. As a result of these contacts he showed a great change. Thereupon, the religious counseler discontinued his visits. This upset the old man immensely and made him worse than he was in the first place. We do not imply that all religious counselors and therapists behave like this. But we have evidence enough to prove that mere emphasis on the understanding of technique alone is often advocated. A situation to illustrate this is that of a young girl of twenty-two years of age who was a patient in a reputable private mental hospital in New England. She happened to be known to us through her father, so we began to visit her in the hospital. She told us that she was not confiding all her problems to the doctor. "I don't tell him my problems because he doesn't care for me," she said. Her expression was significant. Dr. Wright fully realizes this point, which he has expressed in his paper as well as in his personal treatment of his patients. There must be feeling for the patient, client, or student who is seeking stability and integration and above all spiritual development.

It seems that many outstanding religious leaders who advocate the necessity of pastoral counseling feel that religious ministers

[15] *Ibid.*

or counselors should go through deep analytical therapy in order to be of help to their parishioners and clients. Dr. Seward Hiltner, one of the leading personalities in this field, suggests that the pastors should undergo psychoanalysis as part of their training, just as the professional psychiatrists do. He also says:

> Even a relatively brief series of consultations with a good therapist can be valuable to the minister, both personally and professionally. Professionally speaking such personal therapy is important not so much in teaching one how to counsel, as in teaching him what to expect from counseling and therapy.[16]

However, he indicates that it is not absolutely necessary for a minister to seek the services of a therapist. He writes:

> Of course, the number of therapists is small; it costs money to go to them—though not an excessive amount usually; and they are sometimes ignorant of philosophy and blindly antitheological. We do not say a minister must have such consultations. But if he has the time and means and accessibility and interest, he will get something that profits him both personally and professionally. He will still, however, need training in pastoral counseling.[17]

It goes without saying that Dr. Hiltner wants to help the people and also to teach the young pastoral counselors. We would have appreciated finding passages in his book advocating the direct mental training of religious counselors.

Technical training and mere knowledge of the causes of mental disturbances and disintegration do not integrate the personality and change the behavior pattern even of those personalities who are not totally disintegrated. Emotional reconstruction needs a sympathetic, patient, and loving emotional relationship between the helper and the helped, as well as an understanding of techniques and causes. The reconstruction must be achieved by the person himself, but we agree with Dr. Wright and such others that help is needed not only by the disorganized persons but also by the fairly normal persons.

Clinical psychologists and religious counselors should recognize that their own personality has a tremendous effect on their clients, patients, or students. If they are loving and sympathetic,

[16] Seward Hiltner, *Pastoral Counseling* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), p. 249.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 250.

then their clients will react in one way; but if the counselors are indifferent and treat their clients as mere cases, they will react in another way. People who do not have affection and sympathy cannot touch the emotional life of those they are trying to help. Religious counselors especially should remember this fact; otherwise, their aggressive and non-directive counseling will mean little where the integration of personality is concerned.

A question may arise about the effect of the integrated personality on society at large. Therefore, it should be noted that the principles which are applicable to individual integration are also applicable to social integration. Social integration and stability depend on the kind of philosophy adopted by a society and its application by the leading personalities. It is impossible to integrate a society unless its leaders are integrated. The dynamics of the individual mind affect the group.[18] The lives of great reformers like Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, and Ramakrishna, and St. Francis and Swami Vivekananda have already proved that the dynamic, integrated personality can transform cultural patterns in society by changing the individual thought currents and lifting the people to a higher plane of consciousness. So it is the individual integrated personalities who build up an integrated and harmonious culture.

[18] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu View of Christ*, chap. IX, "Teaching and Preaching."

CHAPTER XV

Is Religion Escapism?

RELIGION is something like an opiate, according to the Marxist view. The Charvakas, materialists of India, have also criticized religion vigorously. Ever since the period of the Renaissance, and especially during the last two centuries, strong criticism has been leveled against religion in Europe.

Let us first consider the attack being made by the modern psychologists and psychiatrists. The Freudians have come to the conclusion that religion is an escape mechanism. Their interpretation is that the "father complex" has been introduced by those in the field of religion and it is an inherent defect or weakness of the human mind. In his book, *Totem and Taboo,* Freud elaborates his previous idea of the father complex. He says:

> . . . psychoanalytic investigation of the individual teaches with especial emphasis that god is in every case modelled after the father and that our personal relation to god is dependent upon our relation to our physical father, fluctuating and changing with him, and god at bottom is nothing but an exalted father.[1]

Freudians say that human beings, being helpless in their childhood, naturally depend upon their parents, especially upon the father, for protection; so this attitude is transferred to a glorified being created by the human mind. Some of them even go so far as to say that unless this father idea is removed the mind cannot be stabilized and integrated and it will remain full of conflicts. Man wants to run away from the realities of life and depend on the fictitious father. The sooner man faces this problem directly

[1] Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.), p. 244.

and immediately the better it will be for him. The complexes or conflicts of the human mind cannot be dissolved until the cause is removed; and one of the greatest causes according to Freudians is the religious ideal. Withdraw the censorship, the dictation of the superego, and the id or unconscious will stabilize itself and the individual will have a healthy personality.

The Watsonian behaviorists claim that the idea of God, the Father, is nothing but the lingering influence of the medieval medicine man. In the medieval age, the medicine man was regarded as a soothsayer. There were no scientific remedies for physical ailments; when the people were ill, the medicine man would give them herbs or the like, and that would console them. There was very little scientific treatment. The people of Europe depended entirely upon medicine for the cure of their disease and pain. According to the Watsonians, this dependence was gradually transferred to a fictitious being, God, the Father of the universe. As Watson said:

> In the larger group God or Jehovah takes the place of the family father. Thus even the modern child from the beginning is confronted by the dicta of medicine men—be they the father, the soothsayer of the village, the God, or Jehovah. Having been brought up in this attitude towards authority, he never questions the concepts imposed upon him.[3]

Watsonians have come to the conclusion, like the Freudians, that this superstitious idea of God has to be relinquished.

Both orthodox Freudians and Watsonians, from their individual standpoints, attack the basis of religion without any real understanding of religion itself. Neither of these groups realize that religious search is based on the pursuit of truth. There is an inherent urge in the dynamics of the human mind to know about the self and the world. When man searches for his true nature, his place in the world, and his relationship to it, he realizes that there must be something that is beyond him. Herein lies the real discovery of God. It is appropriate at this time to understand the different motivations in religious research. Freudians and Watsonians are confused in the generalizations they have drawn from their study of religion. They take either a few pathological cases or confused personalities and generalize from their

[3] John B. Watson, *Behaviorism* (New York: The People's Institute Publishing Co., Inc., 1924, 1925), p. 4.

study of these cases that all religious persons are seeking a fictitious or imaginative God. Clarification is needed as to why and how man seeks God and finds Him, actually and truly.

No doubt some persons who are disturbed by the problems of the world or who have a sense of inadequacy therefore seek help and redemption from God. But there are many others who have a right understanding of life, who have the spirit of inquiry, and who want to regulate their emotions so that they can have the greatest amount of peace in life. They analyze, philosophize, and make efforts to attain the knowledge of God. There are still others who want to know God immediately and directly. Sri Krishna classifies those who seek religion or God into four groups: "Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me, O Arjuna,—the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of enjoyment, and the wise, . . ."[3] It is true that one group of people seeks the help of God to get rid of troubles and disturbances—physical and mental. Perhaps Watson has this group in mind. People find it very difficult to cope with the problems of life. Naturally they seek a supernatural, extra-cosmic Being or personified nature to help them to get rid of pain and suffering. Some also approach God to overcome the onslaughts of nature.

Those who seek enjoyment approach God to get something positive from Him either in the form of things or qualities, knowing that they, by themselves, cannot get them. Some seek wealth, health, name, fame, power, or position through God when they feel a sense of their own inadequacy. Perhaps Freud had this group in mind and concluded, as did Watson, that all men seek God either through a sense of fear or guilt. There is a tendency among some of the psychologists of religion in the West to conclude that the desire for spiritual life arises from a sense of guilt. This is clearly expressed by Dr. Edwin Diller Starbuck:

> . . . The result of an analysis of these different shades of experience coincides with the common designation of this preconversion state in making the *central fact in it all the sense of sin, while the other conditions are various manifestations of this, as determined, first, by differences in temperament, and, second, by whether the ideal life or the sinful life is vivid in consciousness.*[4]

[3] *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita* VII: 16.

[4] Edwin Diller Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religion* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 58.

Dr. Starbuck further states that: "Conversion is a process of struggling away from sin, rather than of striving toward consciousness."[5] And again he says: "The sense of sin and depression of feeling are fundamental factors in conversion if not in religious experience in general."[6] Professor James also writes:

> . . . To begin with, there are two things in the mind of the candidate for conversion: first, the present incompleteness or wrongness, the "sin" which he is eager to escape from and second, the positive ideal which he longs to compass. Now with most of us the sense of our present wrongness is a far more distinct piece of our consciousness than is the imagination of any positive ideal we can aim at. In a majority of cases, indeed, the "sin" almost exclusively engrosses the attention . . .[7]

In the next group are those who have the spirit of inquiry and really want to know and understand God. They want to get something positive in the form of love, purity, truthfulness, and so forth. They do not necessarily seek God because of fear; their motivation is far greater than consciousness of sin or guilt; in fact, the search for knowledge of God seems to be the most effective dynamic force behind religion. This group of people want to know the real nature of God and their relationship to Him. They are the real seekers of God. There are two distinct types belonging to this group. One type is predominantly emotional; the individuals want to express love for God, feeling that their love for Him will fully satisfy their emotional requirements. They think of Him as mother, father, friend, companion, master, child, or beloved, and express their love to Him through one of these relationships. Many of them also want love from God.

The second type is motivated purely by the pursuit of truth. The individuals approach God entirely from an intellectual point of view. The whole ambition and aim of this group is attainment of the knowledge of God or the Self, or the Reality. In the words of Socrates: "Man, know thyself." They do not accept the existence of God because they hear or read about Him, nor are they satisfied with conceptual or philosophical knowledge of Him. Their whole motive is to experience Him. Their knowledge is of the higher empirical type, or what the Hindus call *samadhi*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 64.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[7] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 209.

(superconsciousness).[8] This is what is known as mysticism, which is nothing but the direct and immediate experience of God. The great devotees and mystics belonging to the established religions are generally found in this group. According to Professor Brightman:

> Of the traits of that experience, the most important for the knowledge of God is the one called by William James its noetic quality. The mystic believes that he knows God in an immediate and absolutely certain experience. The knowledge may be ineffable; in fact, all immediate experience is ineffable. No definition can tell what the quality of purple color is, or the color of a rose; one who tries to tell of such matters can only hope that his words will be addressed to one who has had a similar experience. Otherwise the words are meaningless. So is it with experience of God.[9]

Some of those who want to get rid of pain and agony or who want to get something out of God have sometimes been observed to develop gradually into real seekers of God. Whether they are emotional or intellectual, all seekers of God start with a sense of sin or inadequacy and move toward knowledge and experience of God at their own pace.

The fourth group of people who worship God are those who are already well established in religious experiences. They seek to remain in communion with God because they already know Him. They have experienced Him and are satisfied and peaceful. There is no disturbance in their minds regarding the attainments of the world in the form of enjoyment, power, position, name, or fame. They have already reached the supreme goal. Whether they are of the emotional or intellectual type, they have a continuous sense of the Reality. Even in their ordinary behavior and interpersonal relationships they show the effect of their direct experience of God in the form of love, compassion, understanding, and other such qualities. In fact, they are the most integrated personalities that the world knows. They go beyond the ritualistic type of religion to the actual, first-hand religion, namely direct realization of God.

In the light of the facts of religious living and mystical ex-

[8] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology,* chap. X, "The Superconscious State." *Works,* I, 181. *Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmanda,* pp. 126 and 139.

[9] Brightman, *A Philosophy of Religion,* p. 168.

periences, Watsonians and Freudians are mistaken in their conclusions that religion is based on the medieval medicine man or father complex. Most of these modern psychologists are not at all scientific in their observations and generalizations. Unfortunately, they completely miss the mark of scientific pursuit in the field of religion. They do not realize that the pathological states of mind cannot really attain the final goal of religion—the experience of the Ultimate Reality—that, on the contrary, the prerequisite of religious life is integration of the emotions and personality.

In this connection Karl A. Menninger writes about "Ascetism and Martyrdom," in his book *Man Against Himself:* "Ascetism, for example, with its varied and ingenious devices for prolonging existence for the purpose of enduring more deprivation, is the very refinement of slow death."[10] He also groups the motives of ascetics, neurotics, and alcoholics in the category of chronic suicide. He continues:

> Then there are other forms of chronic suicide which are more dramatic, such as martyrdom and so-called "chronic bad luck," in which the individual, perhaps by provocative means, instigates his own destruction and bears it nobly. Here the subtlety consists in the deftness with which the victim manipulates his situation to his own ends, and then capitalizes upon it, all unconsciously of course.[11]

It seems that Karl Menninger is a thoroughgoing Freudian in his understanding of the death wish as a basic urge. So he interprets every kind of sacrifice and unselfish living in terms of the suicide tendency. One cannot help wondering how any psychologist could come to such a drastic conclusion in the name of science after studying about the incidents in the lives of the so-called ascetics whom we designate as great religious leaders, such as St. Francis of Assisi and St. Teresa of Avila in the Christian tradition and Swami Vivekananda and others in the Indian tradition. It is needless to mention the name of Buddha. Do not thinkers like Menninger realize that religious persons who express unselfish love for the good of mankind are inspired, not by a desire to commit suicide but rather by the noble sentiment of love? Of course, every man has a right to interpret even the noblest senti-

[10] Menninger, *Man Against Himself*, p. 87.
[11] *Ibid.*

ments in any way he likes. Yet some interpretations are mere distortions.

At least nine books have been written by psychiatrists and others within the last hundred years in an attempt to prove that Jesus was a paranoiac with other mental disturbances.[12] These charges have been discussed and refuted in *Hindu View of Christ*.[13] If one is to be scientific, he must take into account all available facts and then come to his conclusions. We admit that there are some morbid personalities who have the tendencies that Menninger enumerates in his book. But it is unscientific on the part of a scientist to generalize from the study of morbid cases and conclude that all ascetism is based on the desire for suicide. Of course, he may have his own definition of ascetism, but the definition of this word in the dictionaries does not at all justify his interpretation. Religious individuals who impose on themselves a certain form of discipline and self-control are not going through a gradual process of suicide but they are rather finding satisfaction in the higher aspects of life. They are the people who are fully satisfied and joyous.

Some psychologists have adopted Menninger's method of condemning religious attitudes, experiences, and values. One of these, Professor James H. Leuba, in his books *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism* and *God or Man?*, discounts religious experiences and values with a great deal of apparent rationalism. He does not hesitate to call the mystics neurotics and often predominantly sexual. Like Menninger, he interprets the mystic experiences with a great deal of ingenuity and sees in them some of his preconceived notions and theories of human urges or sentiments. He says:

[12] David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Revised for the German People* (1865). H. J. Holtzmann, *The Messianic Consciousness of Jesus* (1907). Herman Werner, "The Historical Jesus of Liberal Theology, A Psychotic," *The New Ecclesiastical Journal,* XXII (1911), pp. 347-390. Oskar Holtzmann, *Was Jesus an Ecstatic?* (1903). Julius Baumann, *The Character of Jesus* (1908). George de Loosten (Dr. George Lomer), *Jesus Christ from the Standpoint of Psychiatry* (Bamberg, 1905). William Hirsch, *Conclusions of a Psychiatrist* (New York, 1912), pp. 87-164. Charles Binet-Sanglé, *The Insanity of Jesus,* 3rd ed., Vols. I, II; 1st ed., Vols. III, IV (Paris, 1911-1915). Emil Rasmussen, *Jesus, A Comparative Study in Psychopathology* (Leipzig, 1905).

[13] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu View of Christ,* pp. 18-20.

If the World would not feed his ambition and appease his aspiring heart, the Church and God would. He soon came to be of the opinion that the holy life had provided him with grander triumphs and greater love than the World could have offered him.

Similarly with Ignatius Loyola; when, in consequence of the loss of a leg, a glorious career in the armies of his earthly sovereign had become impossible, he sought and found compensation in the service of God and the Church.[14]

He also interprets many of the utterances of St. Teresa of Avila in terms of the sex urge, following the lead of Havelock Ellis and Sigmund Freud. To quote again:

This mixture of exquisite pain with incomparable delight is usual in mystical love-ecstasy. The pain, as much as the pleasure, indicates most probably, as we shall see, the participation of sex organs tormented by an insufficient stimulation.[15]

He gives the same interpretation of the ecstasies of St. Catherine of Genoa and St. Margaret Marie.

We wonder why he did not discover that there is a psychosomatic relationship in the human structure. When a man intensely feels the Crucifixion of Christ, for instance, and such other incidents, could there not be also a physical reaction and expression of similar intensity? Does he not know that St. Francis of Assisi had stigmata, and that others have also shown such symptoms due to their intense love for Christ? In short, the spiritual may be the true cause of the physical symptoms. Perhaps psychologists like Leuba have not reckoned with the present trend toward a psychosomatic interpretation of human existence. We wonder if a man should not hesitate before interpreting religious states which are foreign to his own experiences. Would Leuba accept the statements of a theologian who judged the discoveries of nuclear scientists without himself having been in the laboratory? Similarly, the psychologists of religion first ought to go through the required training in order to be able to evaluate expertly the experiences and values of religion. Of course, every man has a right to express what he thinks, be it reasonable or unreasonable, but let it not be regarded as scientific interpretation when it is not based on adequate experimentation.

[14]James H. Leuba, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1925), p. 121.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. 144.

Orthodox Freudian analysts and psychologists like Leuba and others who follow the lead of Freud, in a peculiar way identify human energy with their interpretation of libido, namely, the sex urge. But the power in man cannot be equated to the function of sex. Does a man operate only on that plane? It seems that they are reducing human beings to a level worse than that of animals in their interpretation of human energy. Psychiatrists like Jung differ with them in their interpretation of the libido; Jung calls it a vital force.[16] Philosophers like Henri Bergson also take a broad viewpoint on vital energy (*élan vital*). Any rational thinker who has a broader view of human nature cannot help but regard as unscientific and non-rational the interpretation of the libido given by the Freudian type of thinkers. The pity is that Leuba and others take certain facts and interpret them according to their own ideas. To our way of thinking, man has power. It can be expressed in various ways—through sex, knowledge, and also spirituality. The mystics or religious leaders direct their vital force—call it libido or anything you like—to the spiritual reality instead of directing it through the channels of sex, self-expression, or other such urges.

It is amazing to note how a keen intellectual can interpret things to suit his own purpose and thereby do great damage to human society. Little do such psychologists and psychiatrists think that their interpretation of an experience may be incorrect. The experience of laughter can be produced by various reasons. There is a common expression that a fool laughs at a joke three times: once because other people laugh, the second time because he understands the joke, and the third time because he realizes what a fool he was not to understand it at first. McDougall's experience with different interpretations of the same dream by various psychoanalysts illustrates how interpretation can become faulty because of the preconceived notions of psychologists and psychiatrists.[17]

In *God or Man?*, Professor Leuba seemed to hope that religion will die out. He writes:

> In the moral realm also, the religious method is rapidly being displaced. In the hands of specialists in character formation and reforma-

[16] Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul.*
[17] McDougall, *Outline of Abnormal Psychology.*

tion, scientific methods prove their superiority and crowd the religions out of a sphere of activity which they have long regarded as pre-eminently their own. Thus, the religious method seems destined to suffer the fate of magic, because, like magic, it cannot stand comparison with the scientific methods of maintaining and enhancing life.[18]

Professor Leuba seems to be ruthless in his condemnation of *yoga* practices in India. In fact, his evaluation of *yoga* practices and their goals is unscientific and dogmatic. Evidently, he never cared to study them systematically and understand what they really are. So he concludes that experiences in *yoga* are induced by drugs and narcotics and intoxicating liquor. We admit that there have been some such addicts who want to associate themselves with some forms of Hindu and Buddhistic religious practices. These forms originated during the disintegrating period of Buddhistic culture and continued in some Tantrika and Buddhistic practices. But they are not regarded as the true spirit of *yoga*; nor does any sensible man in India regard narcotic states as *yoga* experiences. Leuba should understand that *yoga* practices enable a man to integrate his emotions, unify his personality, and finally attain the actual experience of the ultimate Reality. The test of those experiences is fully discussed in this book and in *Hindu Psychology*.

The criticism Leuba makes can be directed only to abuses of religious practices in all religious groups. But no religious man belonging to any group will take those abuses to mean religious realization. Leuba and others, as scientists, should remain objective and thorough in their evaluation. Otherwise, they will mislead the people, the effect being noticed in modern society. These psychologists and psychiatrists, as well as social philosophers, can be made responsible for erroneous interpretation of religious ideals, religious practices, and religious achievements. We refer these people to Swami Vivekananda's four books on *Yoga*, Sir John Woodruff's *Serpent Power* (a translation of a Tantrika book called *Sarchakranirupana*), *Dhammapada* (Sayings of Buddha), and other such Buddhistic writings.

Something may be said in explanation of Leuba and others. If they cannot understand the mystic practices and experiences in

[18] James H. Leuba, *God or Man?* (London: C. A. Watts & Co., 1933), p. 299.

the Christian tradition, how can they understand *yoga* techniques and realizations, even though many of the *yoga* practices are similar to those of the great Christian mystics? Swami Brahmananda used to tell his disciples that until the mind is purified one cannot comprehend higher spiritual realizations. In fact, these thoughts do not arise in unprepared minds.[19] Sankara—in the first part of his works dealing with the requirements for the study of the inner spirit of Vedanta—and Patanjali, the father of Hindu psychology—in his first aphorism—declare that unless the mind is trained it cannot really go through higher spiritual practices nor can one understand the higher truth.

It is a joy to note that there are thinkers who are equally scientific and at the same time who, as true scientists, do not have preconceived notions. We present Dr. Allport's point of view:

> Some critics argue that religion at best is hamby-pamby suggestion therapy, providing blinders for some, patches and crutches for others. Suggestion therapy, they argue, does little excepting anaesthetize the individual to the starkly realistic problems confronting him. They add, correctly enough, that unless a person can face the deeply pessimistic elements in his situation he is not likely to solve his problems either with psychotherapy or religion. In support of their argument these critics point to the shoppers who wander from one religious cult to another, learning here, that their problems are illusory; there, that they should listen for the "vibrations"; and elsewhere, that in the world to come there will be fish fries and dancing. Yet the critics fail to perceive that it is only religious immaturity that seeks suggestive therapy of this sort. A mature religious sentiment is neither escapist nor evasive.[20]

Williams James and James Bissett Pratt, who preceded Professor Allport and other such broad psychologists, showed a truly scientific attitude. It is also important to note what a great American philosopher, Dr. Douglas V. Steere, has to say about ascetism. He is not an ascetic himself but he is deeply interested in spiritual life. He understands the values of religious experiences, not merely from what he calls "bookish" interests but from actual participation in the practices. He writes:

> In all asceticism the principle of abstaining from things that are precious and good (from food, from speech, from physical comforts,

[19] *Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda,* p. 146.
[20] Allport, *The Individual and His Religion,* p. 82.

from marriage) for the sake of accentuating something more good in itself is a sound principle and is sound practice, so long as it is done voluntarily and joyously and not grimly, and so long as it can be regarded as a matter of private vocation and is not universally pressed on others.[21]

There are others who, although they do not attack religion itself as escapism, consider as such certain phases of religious life. During our university life in Calcutta, an English missionary taught us the constitutional history of Europe. He was regarded as an authority on the three R's—Reformation, Renaissance, and Revolution. He was very enthusiastic in his condemnation of monastic life. In reply, we quoted to him the monastic vow that is taken by both Hindus and Buddhists: "For the good of many, for the happiness of many, for the realization of God, and to help others do the same." The monastic vow of the Christians is similar.

This gentleman and many others have criticized this one phase of religious life. They claim that ascetics or monks are parasites. In the Orient and in the West it is often said that the monastic orders are fostering parasites because they receive the goods of the world and do not contribute to the world. They are enjoying the modern conveniences of life and many people have worked that they may enjoy the comforts and sit comfortably thinking of God. Would they have thought of God if they did not have these comforts? In the North, they would be destroyed by snowstorms and blizzards without shelter. So they depend upon others to give them these things. What are they giving in return? These are legitimate questions and questions that are especially urged by Communists.

Our answer is that when a monk or a nun or anyone else finds God in himself, he finds the Infinite in others. The result is that he becomes a proper person to love his neighbor as himself. Many persons forget that they are to love their neighbors as the veritable manifestations of their real Self or God or the Absolute. St. Francis of Assisi was inspired by love for God and love for man and he established the Franciscan Order so that the monks would not only live an intense life of God-conscious-

[21] Douglas V. Steere, *On Beginning from Within* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1943), pp. 66-67.

ness but would also be the servants of mankind. He certainly introduced a great reformation of the whole Christian tradition of that period. The spirit of self-sacrifice and dedicated service of man is the keynote of the Franciscan Order. We know what would be the condition of the Christian Church today were it not for the advent of this great man, St. Francis of Assisi, and others of that period. Similar orders were also established by other great Christian leaders. One of the latest in the Christian tradition, the Society of Friends or the Quakers, also teaches that a man of "inner light" should be the servant of mankind.

Another Christian leader used to say that monks were like dry leaves drifting here and there. They had no standing or stamina. He also said that he often noticed that certain members of religious groups become extremely egocentric after they entered middle age. After forty they thought only of themselves and become anxious about their power and position. We admit that people can become egocentric, but it is not because they are monks or nuns, or householders—single or married. It is rather because they do not have an absorbing interest in the real spirit of religion. Time and again, we have seen many persons in the world who were supposed to be living for the good of many but who had become egocentric and fascinated by themselves, because they did not have an absorbing interest in the higher spirit of religious life. There have, of course, been abuses of monastic life; but it would be a blunder to consider the abuses as a result of the monastic ideal of life.

Critics criticize the abuses of religion as if they were religion itself. About four years ago, Swami Vishwananda and I were having dinner in a Chinese restaurant. Some of the waiters were Chinese college students. Seeing that we were Orientals, they approached us and after a little conversation said: "The white people are exploiting your country and our country because we are too religious." They felt that religion was the cause of the downfall and exploitation of India and China, and that the only remedy for this was to discard religion. We replied: "We are not quite sure that your diagnosis is correct. We wonder if it is not that your people and our people in India and China have a misconception of religion or are not practicing religion properly." This is not only the complaint of the Chinese. In India some

of the young people feel that religion is the opiate of the ignorant. The Russians were told by their leaders that religion kept the Russian people under the subjugation of the Czarist Government or bourgeois capitalists; the Church was the cause of the poverty, degradation, and ignorance of the people. So they overthrew both the Czarist Government and the Church. This idea is invading both the East and the West. Some of the Easterners, Hindus and Chinese, and some of the Westerners, feel that religion is escapism or an opiate for the weaklings.

There is another group known as "humanists" which is rather critical of religion. These people are associated with religion and they consider themselves religious people; but their interpretation of religion is quite different from that of Jesus, Hindu teachers, or other great founders of religion. They do not talk of God but rather strongly emphasize the second commandment of Jesus: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor." According to them, religion is to be focused on man; service to man is all that is needed. A person can be religious without thinking or talking of God. Religion is needed, but it is meant for ethical living; society cannot stand without proper ethical principles. We are social beings and should know how to work and live together; society will not hold together without the spirit of cooperation and coordination. In order to have a cooperative society, there must be a certain number of ethical principles. People must be truthful and kind and must help their neighbors. There have been humanists in the East since the time of Buddha, but Buddhistic humanists are quite different from those in the West. While Babbitt and others in America have stressed that the purpose of religion is fulfilled when man does good to man and establishes a healthy, cooperative society, the Buddhists have based their humanism on the search for the state in which there is cessation of pain. Buddhism is founded on the four truths, namely: (1) there is pain in life; (2) pain has a cause; (3) pain will cease to exist; (4) there is a way to overcome pain.[22] The fourth truth has eight steps, right thinking, right living, right meditation, and so forth. In this we find the true basis of Buddhistic humanitarianism in consecrated living. The primary emphasis of Buddhistic humanism is on the realization of truth, the cessation

[22] *Dhammapada*, trans. Max Müller, XIV: 191.

of pain, and the expansion of consciousness rather than on merely doing good to others. In Buddhism, humanism or doing good to others is, in a way, the method for reaching the ultimate goal, *nirvana,* which is the cessation of the empirical self and the culmination of consciousness.

Modern humanism is not the main purpose of real religion; it is rather a secondary issue, a by-product. Real religion is knowledge and awareness of the Reality. Some people say that love of God will solve our problems. However, few people express love of God when they face the problems of life. Many of those who talk and write about it are the ones who reveal little love of God or neighbor in dealing with their problems. Is this the fault of any particular individual? No, it is the fault of the human mind. The love that is talked about or written about is not manifested until a person has had some experience of God. Therefore, in order to reach a real state of religion a person must have direct and immediate knowledge of God.

Our answer to the humanists is that they can do good to the world only when they find God in themselves and the world. Our answer to some of the psychologists and psychiatrists is that the idea of God did not come from the medieval medicine man or from the father complex; the idea of God came from the search for the Reality, from the search for bliss. With this understanding, complexes and conflicts can be dissolved. Spiritual practices integrate the emotions and stabilize the personality. A person is thoroughly integrated when he is established in God. Mental disturbances have no place in true religion. When a man in pursuit of abiding happiness stabilizes his personality and is established in bliss, he transmits his achievements to society. He becomes a thoroughgoing altruist expressing love to all, as we see in the lives of the great mystics of all religions.

Now let us consider whether religion itself is escapism; then we can consider whether monastic life is escapism. What does religion give us and what is its value? Is it a refuge from the realities of life? Jesus did not take His disciples away from the world to ignore it or escape from it; He wanted them to be free from the evils of the world, to be in it but not of it.

> I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from evil.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

. . . .

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.[23]

These statements of Jesus require considerable clarification, for many people misunderstand them. He was not the only religious leader who wanted to save His followers and through them successive generations from misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and misuse of the world. Swami Vivekananda describes religion as the manifestation of the divinity that is already in man. Can anyone construe this sentence as defeatism and escapism from the realities of life? Is man running away from the world in religious life? We find an answer in Dr. Allport's statement: "A religious sentiment is neither escapist nor evasive."[24] Man finds the greatest expression of his real self in religion. Leuba regards mystical experiences as worse than escapism. According to what he writes in two of his books, he seems to feel that such experiences could be produced by autosuggestion and by drugs. He says: "Thus, the mystical ecstasy is in part the outcome of the mystic's expectations, and, therefore, may be regarded as a product of autosuggestion."[25] Then he writes:

These drugs not only bring about relaxation and somnolence, but the mental activity that persists seems alien to the subject's own will. Under the influence of these drugs he becomes passive and yet he dreams, sees visions, and enjoys an impression of delightful freedom and unlimited power.[26]

Perhaps Leuba does not realize that autosuggestion cannot give anything more than a man possesses. Hypnotism or autosuggestion generally disintegrate the personality. Similarly, drugs do not produce any actual knowledge of the Reality nor do they integrate the personality. On the contrary, the drug addict gradually becomes less than what is called normal. On the other hand, religion brings out the finest qualities in man; it brings out his divine nature; it makes him aware of what he really is. Swami Vivekananda clarifies this in his statement:

[23] John 17: 15-16, 18.
[24] Allport, *The Individual and His Religion*, p. 82.
[25] Leuba, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, p. 157.
[26] *Ibid.*

What makes the difference? From one state a man comes out the very same man that he went in, and from another state the man comes out enlightened, a sage, a prophet, a saint, his whole character changed, his life changed, illumined. These are the two effects. Now the effects being different, the causes must be different. As this illumination with which a man comes back from Samadhi is much higher than can be got from unconsciousness, or much higher than can be got by reasoning in a conscious state, it must therefore be super-consciousness, and Samadhi is called the super-conscious state.[27]

A man is not selfish when he seeks to find his real Self in a monastery or any other place. When he finds his own Self or soul, he finds the souls of others, because there is only one Soul. If a person touches the Atlantic Ocean near Boston, he has touched the whole Atlantic Ocean. He does not have to go to New York or Atlantic City. When a person touches the Reality in himself, he is touching the Reality of his friends and others. Experience proves that when a man has realized God, he sees the presence of God in others and in the whole world. He feels the presence of that luminous substance everywhere. He knows that the Absolute cannot be limited by geographical, racial, or denominational consciousness. When a Jewish man experiences God, he finds Him in the Christian, too; when a Hindu experiences God, he finds Him in the Mohammedan. God cannot be limited to a Hindu, Christian, or Jew, although many ignorant persons think that it is only possible to experience Him through a particular denomination, creed, or racial affiliation. This shows ignorance of the real nature of God. St. Francis of Assisi could say "Brother Wolf" and "Sister Moon" because he felt the divine presence everywhere, even in animals and plants. The effect of his personality on others was wonderful; through his influence, the wolf of Gubbio was transformed.

So religion is not for running away from the world but for finding the divine in the world. Religion teaches us to see God in ourselves and then in the world. A person cannot see God in the world until he finds God in himself. In one of the Upanishads it is said: "In the Infinite alone there is bliss and not in the finite."[28] The trouble that arises in the world is based on the misunderstanding that the finite is the real. We see an individual

[27] *Works,* I, 181.
[28] *Chhandogya Upanishad,* chap. VII, sec. 23.

and identify him as Mr. Smith. A few years later, perhaps a few months later, there will not be any visible trace of this man. He did not exist as Mr. Smith a few years ago. However, behind this man, this manifested form, is the real. Religion teaches us to find the real in the manifested. When we find this, the soul of man, then alone we find what we are all seeking—bliss and joy. In another Upanishad it is described: "That one who is the self-made is verily the joy."[29] In other words, the Infinite is bliss, joy. God is joy.

Everyone is anxious to find happiness. Some persons think that they will be happy when they have power and position; others are seeking the same thing in the accumulation of wealth; some look for it in forms of self-expression; still others try to find it in the security of a home and family life. The vast majority of the people seek happiness through the finite quality of the senses, and the result is extreme unhappiness. There is no satisfaction in the finite life. Instead of finding peace, a person wants more and more. Children are often heard to ask for more and more. Adults are ashamed to say so, but their activities reveal that their desires are multiplying. No one can be condemned for that because man will never be satisfied until he finds the Infinite. His nature is infinite and the Infinite cannot be satisfied by the finite. A man may get degree after degree in the universities or millions and millions of dollars but he will remain unsatisfied. Does anyone know of a wealthy man who is satisfied? Was there ever a satisfied imperialist? He may have a big empire to rule but he will want a still larger one, because he has the wrong attitude toward life. If anyone else were in the same position as the imperialist, he would manifest the same qualities, provided he had the same attitude toward life. It isn't the world that drags a man down; it is the attitude of the man toward the world that drags him down. So if a man wants satisfaction and happiness, he must try to find the Infinite in the finite. Religion teaches the method of finding the Infinite.

When a man sees God in himself, he sees Him in the world; and the world can never affect him. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that it is the mind rather than the world that binds a person. It is the mind that thinks of a person as a sinner or a thief. Again,

[29] "Brahmananda Valli," *Taittiriya Upanishad*, chap. VII.

it is the mind that thinks of a man as the veritable manifestation of God. A person's relationship with another will be different when the presence of God is seen in him. When the presence of God is seen in the world, a person will serve the world. The servants of the world are those who are thoroughly established in the knowledge of God. Can you find better servants of the world than St. Francis of Assisi and Swami Vivekananda? We would like to see anyone who could serve the world as thoroughly as Swami Vivekananda. The secret of his service was the highest realization of God. He felt the identity of the divine all over the world. He did not make any differentiation between Hindu or Mohammedan, Jew or Christian, American or Indian, because he saw God in all. So if a person wants to do good in the world, he must find the source of joy and bliss first. That is the very reason that Jesus gave as the first part of His commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God . . ."

The dynamic of religion is expressed in the form of personal awareness of God and feeling His presence in all. Because of this experience, a truly religious man becomes a source of inspiration to the world, as we find in Buddha, Jesus, and Sri Ramakrishna. His living example inspires others. Consequently, a new spirit is instilled into civilization.

The power of religion is felt not only in individual life but also in collective life. As the different members of society live in the consciousness of the presence of God, they establish the true spirit of cooperation and coordination. In fact, a harmonious society can be established only when the ideal of society is to feel the presence of God in the different members. To illustrate this, we can consider the various periods of Hindu, Buddhistic, and Christian culture. In fact, a high type of civilization arises only when the religious ideal—feeling the presence of God and loving one's neighbor—becomes the predominant factor of society. We have seen and we know mystics and monks who seemingly live away from society; yet their love for human beings is intense. They are altruistic. In no way are they inferior to the mystics and religious persons who are living and working in the service of man. Of course, there are some selfish individuals in all stages of life; but it is the height of folly to conclude that a person who is dedicated to the knowledge and love of God is an

escapist. On the contrary, as he experiences the universal Being his inner nature expands and he can embrace the whole world. The utterances and activities of Swami Vivekananda and St. Francis of Assisi prove that genuine mystics are thoroughgoing altruists. They are the persons who teach others to become altruists.

Real religion is not escapism or running away from the realities of life. It is the everyday application of the love of God and the love of neighbor and the manifestation of divinity that is already in man. All personal and interpersonal conflicts vanish. This spirit can alone establish harmony in the individual himself and in society.

CHAPTER XVI

Power Through Religious Practices

LIFE can become dreary and disagreeable the moment we turn our minds from God to things of the world. This does not mean that it is necessary to give up the world as such, but it does mean that the primary emphasis should be given to God and the understanding of Him rather than to the attainment of things of the world. If we do not give our attention to God, even worldly attainments become eventually meaningless and purposeless. As explained in previous chapters, those who do not give proper attention to the inward life cannot enjoy worldly achievements. They may have everything—wealth, home, family, power, position, and so forth—but because of anxiety, apprehension, and restlessness, enjoyment is impossible. Little do people understand that prayer, meditation, contemplation, and other such practices are necessary for life in the world, apart from their intrinsic value. Of course, these practices are not specifically for the achievement of worldly goods, but the meditative person has the required inward qualities to enjoy the world. Those who forget God actually become victims of their own mental condition. Many also become mental patients. Being disturbed and agitated and not finding peace of mind, they go to pieces physically and mentally. So from a practical point of view, it is necessary to cultivate the inward life, the meditative life. We do not imply that everyone who claims to be a religious person is really religious. We only say that a man who practices true religion is mentally stable.

There is often a dispute between the practical man and the spiritual man. The so-called practical man seems to think that

unless something is useful it is meaningless. He has a sneering attitude toward the spiritual man and considers him a dreamer, while he looks upon the ideals as impractical and useless. Therefore, he thinks that the teachings of great religious leaders are obsolete in this scientific age. However, we know that the methods that are being adopted by these so-called practical personalities are leading them to individual and collective destruction. When they become practical, as they claim, they make themselves so restless and unhappy by accentuating their own desires and by intensifying the causes of their frustration that they ruin themselves. The so-called practical men and women are collectively leading us to a catastrophe. The idealists or religious persons are not, after all, so impractical when they advocate the cultivation of the inward life which brings peace of mind.

What do we mean by an inward life, a prayerful life? We mean the life that is regulated by the thought of God, that is directed and governed by the spiritual ideal, by the realization and understanding of God. If that spirit is withdrawn, then the purpose of life is lost. Some may say that their purpose is to enjoy the world, whether God or anyone else created it. Others may argue: "God created this beautiful world for our enjoyment; otherwise, He could not have made it so attractive or given us the capacity for enjoying it." Although we do not oppose this idea of enjoyment, we want to make it clear that even if a person wants it he must have a peaceful state of mind. Unless God is the objective of life, an individual's desires will be intensified and he will be running constantly after the objects of his desires, thereby creating a state of increasing tension. If everyone becomes practically insane over the attainment of physical comforts, there will be an inevitable clash of personalities. This desire for objective enjoyment brings out the spirit of competition which leads to quarrel and strife in individual life, as well as in family, group, national, and international life. So, we suggest that people install God in their lives. This can be done effectively only with the practice of prayer and meditation. Otherwise, God will not remain the ideal, even with intellectual understanding or philosophical interpretation, because people will install themselves in His place. Time and again well-meaning individuals have started religious life,

but without the cultivation of that life through prayer, contemplation, and meditation they have lost their purpose.

Whether a person has a sense of guilt or sin, whether he feels himself inadequate to cope with the problems of life, whether he is frustrated and disappointed, or whether he is seeking God for His own sake, he must have something to keep up the sustaining power in his life. Many who start a religious life get mixed up with the problems of the world. Herein lies the utility of prayer, meditation, and other such practices. Through spiritual practices a man can achieve what he wishes; that is the reason we say that a man attains power through prayer.

This raises the question as to what a man expects of spiritual exercises. People will ask: "Where do you find a man who gets everything through prayer?" In the first place, it is not commonly understood that this is possible; beyond that it is necessary to know how to pray and to whom to pray. People fail to get what they want and then they complain: "Oh, we do not get anything through prayer." Little do they blame themselves. When they do not achieve what they want, they hold others responsible, even God. Do they stop to think that maybe they have not given any attention to God or have not approached Him for the solution of their problems? If they would think seriously, they would find that their failure is due to the lack of understanding of the technique of religious exercises.

A man must pray to God and to no one else. God is all-loving and omnipotent; He is the One who can give what is needed. There are some persons who pray to other beings. For instance, the spiritualists pray to departed souls and try to get what they want through them or from them. What can a departed soul give? The moment an ordinary person drops his body, he cannot have more than he already possesses. He is still ignorant of God, even if he was a great scientist or philosopher. All achievements are meaningless if one has not realized God. Ordinary departed souls at the utmost can give only what they themselves possess. Then how can they give peace if they did not have peace in life?

Some people try to approach or pray to other subtle-bodied beings, such as Sri Krishna describes.[1] Those beings are also limited, whether they are in the Himalayas, the Alps, or the

[1] *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita* IX: 23-25.

Rockies. Limited beings cannot give anything unlimited, such as peace and joy. The Infinite alone can give that abiding joy. That is the reason Sri Krishna says that a man can reach God through prayer to Him alone. If he prays to departed souls or other subtle-bodied beings he will go to their planes; but if he prays to God he will find Him.

The next question concerns the method of spiritual practices. People often ask: "How should one pray?" Prayers fail and become meaningless when there is no contact with God. Some people pray in a mechanical sort of way, whether they are Hindus, Mohammedans, Jews, or Christians. They go through certain forms, utter the words, read from the books, but their minds are anywhere but in the thought of God. Consequently, there is no contact with Him. That is the reason Jesus said that vain repetitions practiced by unbelievers are meaningless.[2] That which is mechanically repeated does not become effective. Therefore, the prayers are not answered and the people neither get what they wanted nor do they reach God. Prayer becomes effective from both the subjective and objective points of view—namely, brings peace of mind and attainment of the object of prayer—when the mind is concentrated on God. Prayer is a failure from these two points of view when a person does not have that concentration. So it is necessary to cultivate the spirit of communion with Him. When there is continual thought of God in prayer, the prayers will be answered.

There are, it is true, persons who pray for evil results. This is known as "black magic" in all the religious traditions. There are cases where a person of deep concentration can produce an evil effect in others and transfer his thoughts to others as well as control their minds. We knew a man who learned some of these practices through an expert teacher in India so that he could control the mind of his girl friend who was then living in England. Through this method he succeeded in winning the heart of the girl and they were married. Fortunately, both of these persons became interested in proper religious life. Unfortunately, most of those who give attention to "black magic," thought tranference, or control of the minds of others, deteriorate and gradually lose their power of concentration and prayer. A note of

[2] Matt. 6: 7.

warning is needed that no one should indulge in prayer for evil purposes. In fact, prayer or other religious exercises should be used only for the knowledge and love of God and for the good and happiness of humanity—the "neighbor."

The third question concerns the object of prayer. For what should one pray? What is the nature of prayer? In this connection, we would like to clarify the four types of spiritual practices.

The first type is used by the vast majority of the people in order to get what they want in the form of money, homes, families, children, health, power, position, name, fame, and even victory in war. This is regarded as the lowest form of prayer by spiritually developed personalities. Of course, these things can be attained provided the people have communion with God and intense thought of Him as well as emotional absorption in Him. There are many interesting stories in the religious history of the world concerning those who have received health, money, power, and so forth, because they gave their attention to God. Yet even if a man gets the material things he wants, they will create problems in life because they belong to the relative world and will not last long. Again, he will not really know God, and the finite things will not satisfy the Infinite within him.

The second form of prayer or spiritual exercise is practiced for the attainment of higher qualities and the consequent integration of the total personality. For example, the devotees pray for purity, truthfulness, patience, endurance, and love; they do not give attention to power, position, and such. They say: "Oh God, give me devotion and strength so that I can think of You. Give me truthfulness, patience, and endurance so that I can live harmoniously and lovingly in the world. I realize that there are conflicting personalities, that there are disturbing conditions of life. Let me have strength, courage, tenacity, so that I can live under these conditions and realize the Truth." If we study the lives of the great spiritual personalities we find that all of them prayed in this way and all of them attained these good qualities. They had patience, forgiveness, love, and all the other glorious qualities that a man can achieve.

The third kind of practice is deep concentration and meditation. In this practice a man does not pray for anything. His joy is in the thought of God. One may ask: "What does he gain

thereby?" A man of that concentration and meditation gains everything that is to be gained in life. He who constantly communes with God and asks for nothing has knowledge of God. Even from the practical point of view we find that a man of such devotion, love, and communion, generally does not suffer from physical want. It is amazing that he does not pray for his physical requirements, yet he gets them somehow. That is the reason Jesus says: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."[3] Sri Ramakrishna also says: "Give up everything to Him,—resign yourself to Him and there will be no more trouble for you."[4] "God is this wish-yielding tree; whoever says in His presence . . . Oh Lord! Thou hast given me everything—he gets everything."[5] Again, Swami Brahmananda gives the advice: "Believe me, the Lord is always with you. If you practice a little, He will extend His helping hand to you."[6] "Remain under the shelter of His lotus feet. He will do all that is needful; you have only to keep your mind fixed ever on Him."[7] How true it is that when we study the lives of the devotees and saints, we find that they have had everything they required. Some of them have also had a very comfortable life, even though they did not ask for it. God gave them what they needed; He knows the requirements of His devotees. He expresses His love to them as they give attention, love, and devotion to Him. People do not realize that He takes care of them. They think that they have to take care of themselves; then they make blunder after blunder and lose what they want to gain, because their vision, their understanding is confused. In their attempt to gain something, they forget that if they have patience and depend upon God, thinking about Him and meditating on Him constantly, they will find that He supplies everything of His own accord.

This brings to mind an interesting story. There was a beggar who had traveled far and he was so tired that he could hardly walk. So he prayed: "Oh Rama, give me a horse." While he was thus praying wholeheartedly in an agonized state of mind, an

[3] Matt. 7: 34.
[4] *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna* XIV: 321.
[5] *Ibid.*, II: 77.
[6] *Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda*, p. 9.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

English "Tommy" came along on horseback leading some other horses, among which was a young colt. The "Tommy" caught hold of the poor beggar and asked him to carry the little colt. Then the beggar cried out: "Oh, Rama, you misunderstood me! Instead of getting a horse to carry me, I have to carry this colt!" This happens in life. People ask for things which become a burden to them. They want power and position, and the power and position destroy their peace and become a serious burden to them. He who is in constant communion with God through meditation on Him with love and devotion is the wisest of all.

Through deep concentration and meditation a person gains tremendous power of mind. Most people do not actually understand what is meant by the practice of concentration and meditation and intense thought of God. This requires considerable clarification, as they are not in the habit of thinking of God, even though they may have noble thoughts or poetic and philosophical flights of imagination. In the actual practice of concentration and meditation, a person is to sit in a comfortable but erect posture so that his neuromuscular system may be relaxed.[8] That is the reason many aspirants perform certain types of breathing exercises, described in Chapter I. It has been found that postures which relax the neuromuscular system are conducive to mental relaxation. One should sit erect in a comfortable position and try to drop the tension of the muscles caused by rigidity of the nervous system. If one sits erect and gently takes long breaths and exhales gently, keeping the rhythm of inhalation and exhalation at the same tempo, the body relaxes. We warn people in this connection that they must not take what the Hindus call rigorous *pranayama* exercises without proper guidance from a teacher who knows the system of the exercises as well as the requirements of the individual student. This simple exercise along with artificial yawning a few times immensely helps to relax the neuromuscular system for the time being. After relaxing, the mind should be focused on an aspect of God that is suitable to the particular individual. In other words, he must try to focus his mind on a personal aspect of God that he loves and adores. In order to have deep concentration on God, there must be an emotional relationship. When one person loves another, his mind

[8] "Raja Yoga," *Works*, I. See also *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali.*

naturally goes to him. Similarly, when there is appreciation and adoration of God, a person has a certain amount of love for Him. It is true that the type of love which we have discussed cannot be attained immediately. So the spiritual aspirant has to take an aspect of God which appeals to him.[9] Then he must try to focus his mind on the luminous and blissful form of that divine personality without thinking of anything else. It is not necessary to think of attributes and qualities simultaneously. What happens is that when the aspirant tries to visualize that blissful form of his beloved Lord, he spontaneously manifests those qualities.

In the life of St. Francis of Assisi in the Christian tradition, and of other spiritual personalities in Hindu, Jewish, and Mohammedan traditions, we find that even the physical nature of the person who meditates is changed because of the intense thought of the Beloved. During the life of Sri Ramakrishna in modern India his physical constitution would go through a radical change as he performed different types of spiritual practices. The stigmata and such other evidences in the physical constitution of mystics or devotees convince us that the human physical structure can undergo a change according to the intensity of thought. In his everyday life a person can observe that when he experiences anger or any other violent emotion there is a change in the whole neuromuscular system. Similarly, when he has loving thoughts for his parents, children, or beloved, his body becomes relaxed. This common experience also justifies our conclusion that when a person thinks intensely of the Beloved, God, his neuromuscular system becomes quiet and his bodily functions become rhythmical. When great spiritual personalities had the highest type of spiritual realization, such as *samadhi* (superconsciousness), they were radically changed at that time and the effect remained with them.

In case a person does not find it convenient to think of any personality or of God with name and form, such as Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, and others, he can take a symbol of God signifying universal divine qualities, such as light, and focus the mind on that. It has been found that rationalistic scientific thinkers can hardly think of a traditional aspect of God. The so-called pantheistic philosophers also find it difficult to use a personality as

[9] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology*, chap. VI, "Meditation."

an object of concentration. However, they can meditate on any symbol that represents Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.[10]

There are some auxiliary methods that can be used in the practice of concentration. It is true that the mind is extremely flighty and changeable. The majority can hardly focus the mind on one object for more than a few seconds, as they are in the habit of thinking successive thoughts and going through successive experiences and consciousnesses. So it is but natural that they find it difficult to concentrate on one thing intensely for a little while. That is the reason scriptural study, worship, singing of hymns, and the repetition of the name of God are extremely helpful for the preparation of deep concentration and ultimately of meditation.[11]

In Hindu-Buddhistic tradition and in certain Christian and Mohammedan traditions the devotees are advised to repeat a particular name of God. A technical name of God (a *mantra*) representing a particular divine aspect, is used extensively for higher spiritual evolution. When a man repeats a *mantra*, his mind is attracted to that form of God which the name represents. He is also advised by his teacher that when he repeats it he should try to visualize that particular form and gradually have meditation on that aspect of God. During His lifetime, Sri Ramakrishna often discussed this practice with His disciples. "By Japam," He said "by repeating His name with a concentrated mind, you can have His vision, you can realize Him."[12] Swami Brahmananda, one of His foremost disciples, also used to say:

> The practice of *Japam* [repetition of the name of God] is specially suited to our present iron age (Kali Yoga). There is no other spiritual practice easier than this. But meditation must accompany the repetition of the *Mantra.*[13]

It ought to be noted here that as the mind is so restless it will take time for any aspirant to develop the power of concentration. So one should not be discouraged when he finds it difficult to practice. As Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-Gita,* through con-

[10] Sankaracharya, *Vivekachudamani.* See also "Jnana Yoga," *Works,* II.

[11] "Bhakti Yoga," *Works,* III.

[12] *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (2nd ed.; Mylapore, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math), II, 349-350.

[13] *Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda,* p. 18.

stant practice one can overcome the fickleness of mind.[14] An aspirant should remember that even though he may not seem to be making progress in the practice of concentration the very struggle will gradually straighten the mind.

The next point to be considered is the regularity in practice. A person should sit for concentration every day regularly in the morning and evening at a particular period of time. The beginners may start with ten minute periods and gradually increase the duration. In the practice of this form of prayer one must not be impatient. If he steadily practices for a few months regardless of the degree of progress he is bound to grow.

Concentration is regarded as the first stage of meditation. When the mind is wholly absorbed without any wavering, it is regarded as meditation. Some Christian mystics, however, use the word "contemplation." There is no basic difference between these words. It is a question only of quality. Most people do not realize the extent of the power latent in the human mind. All the cherished material objects can be manipulated by the mind. In Patanjali's *Raja Yoga,* it is explained that there are persons who can concentrate their minds on subtle particles of matter. When their minds remain absorbed in those subtle particles, they understand the laws of nature directly and immediately and they can control nature. Grosser expressions like heat, cold, rain, and so forth, can also be controlled by their mental power. There have been many authentic incidents of suspension of animation, and control of the burning power of fire.[15] Patanjali enumerates the actual methods of attaining control over the laws of physical nature. The *Raja Yogis* and *Hatha Yogis* in India demonstrate this power, without the least shade of doubt.

However, our interest is to have the knowledge of God through concentration and meditation. When the mind becomes quiet, when the waves of the mind subside through this practice, then the Truth reveals Itself. Hindu psychologists compare the mind to the surface of a lake. When the wind blows, the water is full of waves and ripples. In the same way, when the passions and desires of man are active, the mind is agitated. When the mind

[14] *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita* VI: 35.

[15] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology,* chap. IX, "Extrasensory Experiences."

becomes quiet through spiritual practices, then alone does a man know the Truth that is inherent in his own nature, just as we can see the reflection of our face in the quiet lake when the waves subside. According to Patanjali: "At that time (the time of concentration) the seer (Purusha) rests in his own (unmodified) state."[16] Swami Vivekananda explains this in his commentary: "As soon as the waves have stopped, and the lake has become quiet, we see its bottom. So with the mind; when it is calm, we see what our own nature is; we do not mix ourselves but remain our own selves."[17]

Another glorious effect of this third kind of prayer is that through steady practice of meditation, a person can become inseparably connected with Him. Intense love is developed for Him and His love goes to the devotee. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that intense love for God binds Him to the devotee.[18] This means that whenever a devotee wants God to reveal Himself with intense love, God through infinite love and grace grants that desire of a devotee. This is hard for an ordinary person to comprehend, but the real devotees like St. Teresa of Avila, St. Anthony of Padua, or St. Catherine of Siena could see God whenever they wished. Do we not read in the biography of Sri Ramakrishna, who lived in India during the nineteenth century, that He could see God at any time He wished. We had the privilege of sitting at the feet of most of His disciples and hearing this from them. We do not doubt it, because their lives also proved to us that they were men and women with experience of God. They also used to tell us that the problems of life would be solved by the practice of concentration and meditation, that God could be bound to the devotee provided he had intense love for Him. One of the saints of India, Mirabai, who composed many hymns said: "You can do everything else but unless you have that intense love for God you cannot have Him." So we see that prayer or contemplation or meditation has tremendous power; we can reach God through these practices. Could we want anything better?

A question may arise here about the place of the grace of God

[16] *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* I: 3.
[17] "Raja Yoga," *Works*, I, 203.
[18] *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna* XXV: 528.

in spiritual realization. Does the devotee have to do everything himself to attain his answer to prayer for things and divine revelation or experiences, or is the grace of God active too? Our answer is that grace has an important place in spiritual experiences of various types. As the personalistic philosophers like Professor Edgar S. Brightman would say, there is cooperation between God and man. Our idea is that the grace of God can be attained only when the devotee remains in a receptive mood by purifying his mind through the practice of prayer, concentration, and meditation and by making his mind one-pointed in directing it to God. Then alone he feels the grace of God and His presence. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say:

> The wind of God's grace is incessantly blowing. Lazy sailors on this sea of life do not take advantage of it. But the active and the strong always keep their minds unfurled to catch the friendly breeze, and thus reach their destination very soon.[19]

The fourth type of prayer is the highest, as Swami Brahmananda says.[20] It can be practiced by few people in this world. This type of communion with God is *samadhi*, superconscious experience. In this state a man is face to face with God. This is also prayer, because in that state there is constant thought of, or absorption in, God. Perhaps some would not call that prayer; they would rather consider it the fulfillment of prayer. We find that the person who is established in the highest communion likes to continue with it. So it is regarded by some of the greatest mystics such as Swami Brahmananda and Swami Vivekananda, as the supreme type of prayer or worship.

When a man has achieved that state there is nothing more to be achieved, nothing more to be known. That is the reason we say that the greatest power that a man can have is gained through prayer. Although the fourth type of prayer cannot be practiced by many persons at once, the third type can be practiced more or less by everyone. Even if one is functioning on the physical plane and wants physical comforts or power and position, he can start with the elementary or first type of prayer. We have seen men and women change radically, using prayers to get something from God. St. Paul's life is a dramatic illustration. This may seem

[19] *Ibid.*, XXVI: 538.
[20] *Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda*, p. 12.

anomalous because he felt hateful towards Christ and His followers. However, although he hated Christ he thought of Him constantly because of his intense feeling. Whether a person touches fire deliberately or accidentally he is burned. The life of St. Paul was affected by his constant thought of Christ, even though he felt hatred rather than love and admiration. Similarly, St. Augustine was transformed through prayer from an ignoble person to a great pillar of Christianity.

There was a little boy in India who was banished with his mother from the kingdom of his father. Even though he was only eight or nine years old, he began to pray for the restoration of the kingdom. He prayed so intensely that eventually God revealed Himself to the boy. Then he no longer wanted the kingdom; his only desire was for the love of God. In religious history there have been many persons who started their spiritual life desiring things of the world; yet even though they wanted money, power, position, and so forth, they thought of God and were changed. It is the intense thought of God which is important. This changes a man's inner nature and he gradually evolves from the lower to the higher types of prayer. The more one thinks of Him with deep concentration, the more his inner nature changes.

Some of the modern psychologists are interested to know the method of removing mental and physical fatigue. Many physicians practicing psychosomatic medicine are anxious to remove mental and physical tension. Many of the therapists, like Dr. Joseph Pratt of Boston and others, are giving exercises to their patients so that the neuromuscular system may be relaxed and functional disorders such as stomach trouble, certain forms of heart ailments, hypertension, and others may be eliminated. Many clinical psychologists and other therapists wonder how the practice of concentration and meditation—the third form of prayer—can be helpful in conserving mental and physical energy and removing mental fatigue and tension.

Our answer to them is that when an individual is to pray or meditate he is generally asked to go through some preliminary processes which are absolutely necessary for the proper practice of prayer. These processes lead to the relaxation of the neuromuscular system. Patanjali, Swami Vivekananda, and others state that unless the body is in fairly good condition the mind cannot

function properly. The nerve centers should be free for their functioning and the whole nervous system must be relaxed. Therefore, they prescribe certain postures and breathing exercises.[21] The idea is that, generally speaking, the ordinary mind functions through the nervous system. As a rule, when the mind is peaceful and restful, the nervous system is also the same. Unfortunately, most people are not mentally relaxed and are full of tension and frustration. Consequently, the neuromuscular system is tense.

Thus preliminary steps for proper posture and certain forms of respiratory regulation are helpful in the preparation for a real prayerful attitude of mind and for the conservation of mental and nerve energy. When a man knows how to relax and practice concentration and meditation he generates tremendous mental energy and strengthens his whole nervous system. In our personal observations we have found that the best way to remove fatigue is to practice systematically mental and physical relaxation and spiritual exercises. When a person is tired, even after sleep, if he tries to do his spiritual practices of concentration and meditation and repetition of the name of God his fatigue is overcome. Moreover, he becomes fit for the continuation of his concentration. The mind becomes free from tension and frustration for the time being, making it possible to concentrate on one aspect of God. It has also been found that a man can be efficient in his activities if he systematically performs his spiritual exercises without getting too much sleep and at the same time without being fatigued. Moreover, he can do better work and remain efficient and alert in every sense of the term. Apart from that, his main objective of life—namely, spiritual unfoldment—becomes attainable.

Beginners, distracted clients, and students do indeed find it difficult to go through religious exercises themselves. That is the reason they need a sympathetic and loving guide or teacher to help them. It is the duty of the teacher to watch over the distracted or disorganized student with sympathy and guide him gradually, step by step, from the beginning of relaxation exercises to deep concentration. In the first place, a student should be given practices of artificial relaxation side by side with a simple

[21] *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* II: 46-55.

method of concentration on one aspect of God, even though this simple practice may be difficult for the time being. The student should be encouraged constantly to go ahead with his practices and he should be watched so that he will remain regular in them, no matter how imperfect they may be. Regularity of practice is important for real stabilization of mind and body.

When the student is a little established, he should be given the more important practice of concentration, gradually leading him to meditation. It is the imperative duty of the teacher to encourage the student in spite of his difficulties and limitations. We have seen in many instances that such encouragement from the teacher immensely helped the student in his emotional integration and development of will power. The moment the teacher becomes impatient he not only defeats his own purpose of helping the student but he does immense harm to him. Once the student is discouraged and becomes unstable in spiritual practices it requires a great deal of new effort for him to become again stabilized, as the mind of the average person is constantly seeking excuses to be irregular. Swami Brahmananda used to tell his disciples that the mind is like a child seeking its own excuses for instability and irregularity. He also said:

> The mind is just like a milch cow which gives a larger supply when fed well. Give the mind more food and you will find it giving you better service in return. And what constitutes the food of the mind? Meditation and concentration, prayer and worship, and all such practices.[22]

When a man gradually becomes established in the thought of God, his neuromuscular system automatically is relaxed. Consequently, he conserves both physical and mental energy. It is known from practical experience that a man of concentration generates mental and physical energy within himself, as a result of this practice. After the practice of concentration the feeling of fatigue vanishes and a man feels invigorated. The psychologists and therapists who want to eliminate mental and physical fatigue and establish harmony of mind should particularly emphasize not only relaxation exercises but also the practice of concentration and meditation, as this restores mental energy and thereby eliminates functional disturbances.

[22] *Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda,* p. 145.

The practice of concentration and meditation also stabilizes the emotions and develops will power.[23] Therefore, even if a person is not inspired by the highest ideal, and even if he is only motivated by the practical aspects for the time being, he should devote considerable time to the third form of spiritual exercises. These practices can have a tremendous effect on all the various functions of man and thereby stabilize and integrate his whole personality.

[23] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology*, chap. V, "Will and Personality."

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MENTAL HEALTH AND HINDU PSYCHOLOGY

By

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